

Suburbia's LONGEST NIGHT

A word and picture presentation of the tornadoes of May 6, 1965, which devastated areas of Fridley, Blaine, Spring Lake Park and Mounds View, Minnesota. (Including a section on the Chanhassen-Minnetonka-Golden Valley areas.)

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The Winds Came . . .
and the Rains Descended . . .



. . . and Then the Calm

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THE RECORD

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The Longest Night

Recordland (so-called because it is served by the Record newspapers) is typically suburban. Its boundaries encompass seven separate municipalities — St. Anthony, Columbia Heights, Fridley, New Brighton, Spring Lake Park, Mounds View and Blaine.

Industry and commerce have been attracted to them. Shopping centers, schools, churches, parks and playgrounds dot the landscape. But most importantly they are cities and villages of homes — mile upon mile of them — adding to the beauty of graceful, curved roadways or squared areas of streets and avenues.

And because nature's bounty has been plentifully bestowed on Minnesota, Recordland is particularly beautiful in late spring. Green trees, lush lawns and gentle, rolling hills give a semi-rural atmosphere to an urban setting.

With the big city a mere stone's throw away, Recordlanders have all the advantages of metropolitan life plus the greater joys of wide open spaces, an abundance of God's fresh air and the chance to "get away from it all" at the end of the day's toil.

This, then, was the setting when the sun dawned May 6, 1965. Its rays glistened on the morning dews like myriads of diamonds and its warmth forecast another day when it was "great to be alive."

A few fleecy clouds appeared now and then, accompanied by gentle breezes which wafted the indefinable scents of springtime across the air.

Then suddenly about 6 p.m. everything changed. The blue of Minnesota's summer sky darkened to a frightening green. Nature's fury overtook the gentle breeze, turning it into gale proportions. Radio stations blared out warnings of impending disaster.

And then it struck!

In the next few hours as many as six separate tornadoes set down on the once peaceful landscape bringing death and destruction and sweeping away everything which dared stand in their paths.

Families were separated, lights went out, telephone lines were torn down, hail and torrents of rain descended and with ferocious suddenness disaster reared its ugly head.

On the following pages the editors of the Record publications have attempted to preserve in word and picture a chronology of these events, to acknowledge the tremendous contribution of civil defense and local police and fire departments, the medical profession, the hospitals, the radio, the national guard and the public officials who breached the gap to hold panic and looting to a minimum.

And, most of all we pay tribute to the citizens of Recordland who closed ranks during and after nature's rampage to aid their less fortunate neighbors and instill in them the will to fight back.

It was their longest night.

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Weather Bureau Records Three Terrible Hours

Official U.S. Weather bureau reports place the duration of the tornadoes from 6:27 to 9:20 p.m., and specify six distinct funnels sweeping an 11 county area adjacent to and including the Twin Cities.

Their records list 14 killed, 633 injured, and place total property damage at an estimated \$7 million from "tornadoes, funnel clouds, winds and hail." The damage figure, as will be seen further on, is at variance with estimates from public officials.

Not all of these six tornadoes struck the Recordland area, but weather bureau reports indicate that at least three of them did, and their pathways can be fairly well charted by combining weather bureau statistics with running accounts of the tornado pathways as aired by Radio Station WCCO, official storm warning radio facility for the Twin Cities.

24 Echoes

Through the evening 24 hook-shaped echoes on the Minneapolis weather bureau radar and a large number of confirmed and unconfirmed funnel clouds were reported, as well as reports of hail -- up to golf ball size -- throughout the region.

Apparently the first tornado sighted was also the first to strike in Recordland. Its initial touchdown was at a farm one mile south of Chanhassen, which would be southwest of Minneapolis. This was at approximately 6:27 p.m.

From there it traveled in a northeasterly direction, with occasional touchdowns, and finally hit at Northern Ordinance works in Fridley at 7:05 p.m. At Fridley city hall the clocks stopped at 7:10 p.m. as the twister passed through the city.

From Fridley it skipped northward, passing just west of Spring Lake Park and touching down in Blaine, severely damaging the Anoka County airport and destroying 10 planes.

The second tornado on the weather bureau list was first reported southwest of Minneapolis at 6:05 p.m. near Green Isle and was dissipated near Hamel in northwest Hennepin county. It never reached the Recordland area.

Nor did the third and fourth twisters, their paths and damage being confined to rural areas west and southwest of Minneapolis.

Fifth Strikes

The fifth was first observed near the Fridley-Minneapolis border at 37th Ave. NE and Marshall St., and apparently was the same funnel seen earlier moving northward from the Chanhassen area.

This twister also hit Northern Ordinance (at 8:10 p.m.) and then moved northeasterly across Fridley. It hit Fridley's junior-senior high school complex and struck the Fridley Trailer court on Central Ave.

It was this tornado which did the most damage in Spring Lake Park where 150 homes were demolished and 145 heavily damaged.

It lifted and dissipated at this point, although severe wind damage was reported later on three farms in the area of Brahm, 50 miles north of Spring Lake Park.

The sixth and final tornado first touched down in Golden Valley at about 8:40 p.m., traveling northeastward and also

touching down in Fridley -- the third twister to strike there -- this time near Highway 100 and University Ave. NE.

It curved northeastward at

Mississippi St., then turned north and went through the Fridley Trailer court. It was this funnel which veered to the northeast and struck Mounds

View, killing six, injuring 150, destroying 45 homes and six apartment buildings.

It was observed passing over

Centerville lake at 8:57 p.m., and did its final damage at 9:20 p.m. on three farms in the vicinity of Almelund in Washington county.



HAIL AS BIG AS GOLF BALLS descended following the touchdown of the tornado funnels as is graphically illustrated by this photo taken during the height of the storm

by Terry Nagle, Record photographer.



RAIN AND HAIL were still falling when Nagle snapped this view of destruction at Fridley Terrace Trailer court, 73rd Ave. NE at Central. Actually, this picture was taken between the first and third funnel setdowns, both of which hit the trailer court, damaging between 60 and 70 percent of the 300 trailers berthed at the site.

Radio Played An Important Role In Issuing Warnings



WITH TELEPHONES, microphones and maps WCCO Radio tracked the vicious tornadoes which struck the Minneapolis area the night of May 6th. The studio which only a few days before had seen weeks of operations as the flood service center was quickly put into operation shortly after the first twister struck, and the people pictured here remained in the studio some 6½ hours to keep the public advised. Staffers pictured (l to r): Dick Chapman, calling out another list of communities in the path of potential danger; Rob Brown, processing calls from the public; Bob Tibbitts, in contact with newsman John Walker at Lake Minnetonka; Charlie Boone, ready with another "live sighting" from a listener.



ALL POOHED was this army reservist who "took a five" in the wee small hours of the morning.

First hint of impending disaster came to residents of Twin Cities Metropolitan area at 8 p.m. when the regular news broadcast of Radio Station WCCO was interrupted to report a severe weather warning.

There was nothing unusual about this because similar warnings are frequently issued to alert residents in the wide three-state area reached by WCCO but, because of darkening skies and the pinpointing of the weather adjacent to the Twin Cities, this did have the effect of alerting the populace in the wide belt which eventually suffered major damage.

Red Alert

At 6:32 the "Red Alert" went out on the air waves from WCCO, triggering other stations and putting WCCO into continuous tornado coverage.

At 7:19 a listener at Excelsior made the first report of actual sighting to Dick Chapman, announcer on duty at the time. He placed the funnel over Glen Lake.

Almost simultaneously Charlie Boone, working with Chapman, monitored a call from a listener in Chanhassen whose conversation verified the location and direction of the funnel sighted by the Excelsior man.

From then until the last funnel had dissipated, a continuing rundown of sightings and directions went out on the air as listeners called the station. Through this effort the Northeast suburbs were advised of approaching trouble and alerted to take shelter. There can be no doubt that this saved many lives and untold injuries.

First report from the Recordland area came at 7:25 p.m. when Robert Clark reported that a funnel had passed through Fridley.

He said, "The funnel touched down at the Fridley Junior High school and tore the roof off the gymnasium and blew in the east side of the building, but no one was hurt. I just came from there and none of the children assembled for the spring carnival were injured. All the children were lying down on the floor of the building and no one was injured."

Not Hurt

Asked by Chapman if he was hurt, Clark replied, "no, I was lying on the floor of my car and all the glass blew across me."

Paradoxically Clark was killed when a later twister hit Fridley.

Additionally, because all ears were glued to the radio, Recordland residents were informed of first aid station sites and hundreds of the homeless and injured were able to proceed to sources of help.

Calls for doctors, nurses and volunteer workers were likewise on the air waves, channeling them to specific centers where they were given assignments and properly distributed to areas of greatest urgency.

The telephone was about all that was left in the demolished home of Eugene and Anita Chouinard, 7311 Melody Dr., Fridley, after the storm.

By an ironic quirk, the tornado ripped away ceiling and walls, damaged furniture virtually beyond repair, scattered rubble everywhere, but left the yellow telephone and its line and wiring intact.

Beneath Trap Door, 7 Waited

A trap door in the kitchen is the only entrance to the basement of the little home at 5601 NE 4th St., just across Hwy. 100 in Fridley.

Down that small hole, "barely in time", went Mrs. Marjorie Clayson, her mother Mrs. Esther Johnson, and her five children just seconds before the first tornado hit their neighborhood Thursday night.

That one took the windows and the roof, left every room in the house ankle deep in shredded insulation, slung drawers out of cabinets and knocked the house partially off its foundations.

Crawling out after the blow, the family went down the street to stay with a neighbor when the second funnel touched down and finished the dirty work on the Clayson home.

The children, aged 15 down to 3, were stacking salvaged clothing, furniture and personal belongings in the front yard Friday morning as their mother stood by in quiet tears and a sister, cousins and other friends and relatives tried to help.

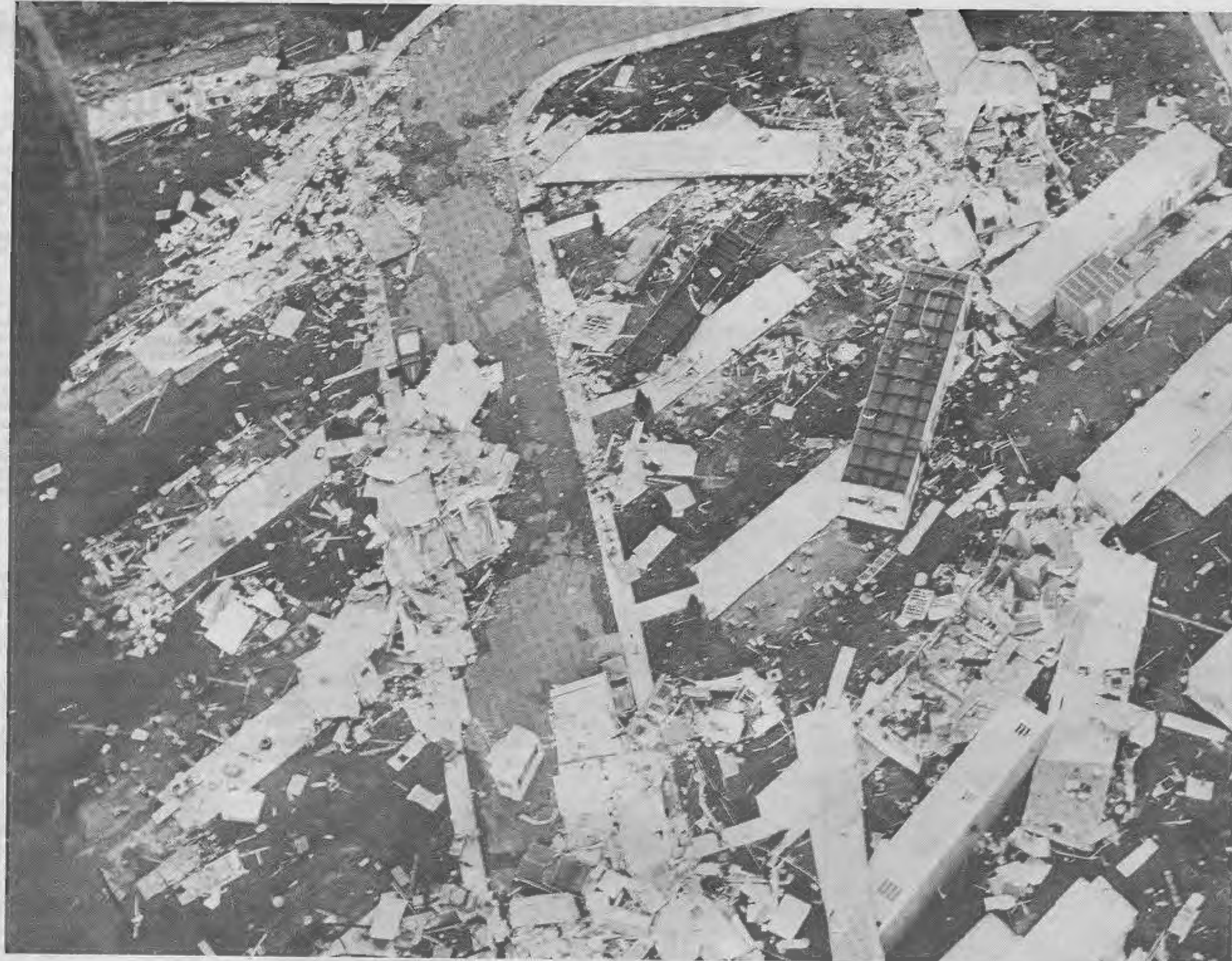
After the front yard was half filled with stacked possessions, the children then turned around and began taking everything back in the ruined house again.

Why? "There's no place else to put it," their mother explained.

HANDS OFF!



TWO VOLUNTEERS search hallways and rooms of Fridley High school to make certain no children were injured after the tornado struck.



FRIDLEY TERRACE TRAILER COURT was hard hit, two of the three twisters touching down at this point. Majority of the 300 trailer homes in the court suffered some form of damage and many were completely demolished.



FRIDLEY'S MAIN BUSINESS SECTION at University Ave. NE and Mississippi St. was directly in the storm's path. The National Food store (right center) was demolished and commercial structures across the street suffered heavy damage.



UNDISTURBED was this dinner, apparently being enjoyed when the storm hit. The roof was taken from the house but nary a dish was broken.

Mercy Hospital Proved Majestic During Crisis

Andka county's infant Mercy Hospital came of age in just 17 hours last week, growing up in a hurry to meet the demands of nature gone berserk.

Seconds after the first tornado funnel touched down in Fridley, the call went out for doctors, nurses and volunteers. The first doctors met the first patients arriving and quickly set up an "assembly line" for treatment.

For long hours, as some 100 injured came to the hospital, the scene was one of orderly chaos. The cafeteria was quickly cleared to hold beds. More emergency cots went up in the halls. The physical therapy room became a treatment area. And everywhere there were people: the injured, the relatives and some 230 medical personnel.

But by noon on Friday, all extra beds were gone from the halls and cafeteria. All less seriously injured persons had

been treated and released. Three operating rooms were closed down after handling all the critical cases. The extra doctors, nurses and volunteers had gone home.

By mid-afternoon, the hospital was as calm and quiet as if nothing had happened. A few staffers sipped coffee in the lunchroom. Sunlight filtered through curtains into the still cafeteria, where chairs and tables stood neatly in their proper places. A lone registered nurse waited in the lobby for a ride home, her duty time over.

And in his office behind the reception desk, administrator Robert Van Hauer leaned back in his chair, put his shirt-sleeved arms behind his head, and smiled with somewhat weary satisfaction.

"The whole spirit of this thing was tremendous. You'd think we'd been open seven years instead of just seven weeks," he said.

"At no time was there a shortage of doctors. We know there were 56 here we had time to identify. Others came and we didn't need them, so we sent them on to the roller rink and the other emergency shelters.

"If anyone had any doubts about the need for this hospital, this should settle them once and for all," Van Hauer noted.

The hospital was alerted to a possible emergency before the tornado ever struck. Dr. Sipe and assistant administrator Tom Mattson stepped outside the building for a breath of fresh air just before 7 p.m. Thursday and saw the funnel approaching Fridley. The police alarm came minutes later.

"At the time of the storm there were three doctors here," said Van Hauer, "and our regular nursing staff of about 35 to 40, and about six technicians." By the time emergency treatment was in full swing, these others had arrived: at least 53 doctors; a group of 15 Red Cross nurses; 15 members of the hospital ladies auxiliary, mobilized by their vice-president, who is the wife of the Coon Rapids mayor; many off-duty firemen and police officers; and other nurses and technicians to bring the total to about 130 extra persons helping the regular staff.

Ambulances from Mercy, and a Chevrolet carryall pressed into duty, sped back and forth most of the night. The carryall became a disaster victim itself when flying debris from the tail end of a second tornado struck it, knocking out windows and headlights and damaging the side. Driver and patients sat amidst the broken glass and managed to get back to the hospital.

Advance preparations made a difference too. When regular electric power fluctuated on and off, the hospital switched to its diesel emergency power plant for 1 1/2 hours. Mercy's own shortwave radio system made communications "excellent" between all ambulances, police and other emergency vehicles and the control center. It also freed the telephone switchboard for other use.

Friday morning there were 148 people in the 140-bed hospital, Van Hauer said.



VICTIMS REGISTERED at hastily set-up locations.

Business Set Back

Commercial property was some of the hardest hit by Thursday night's tornadoes. Two shopping centers and many stores were wiped out.

Brand new Moon Plaza in Fridley was extensively damaged. Estimates of building destruction alone will cost \$250,000.

The new shopping area at Osborne Road and Central is almost totally destroyed. Gordie's Superette, the VFW post and barber shop were extensively battered.

Market Center Drug in Spring Lake Park had the roof taken off their recently remodeled store. Business was conducted in a circus tent Saturday and Sunday. Water damage to inventory was high.

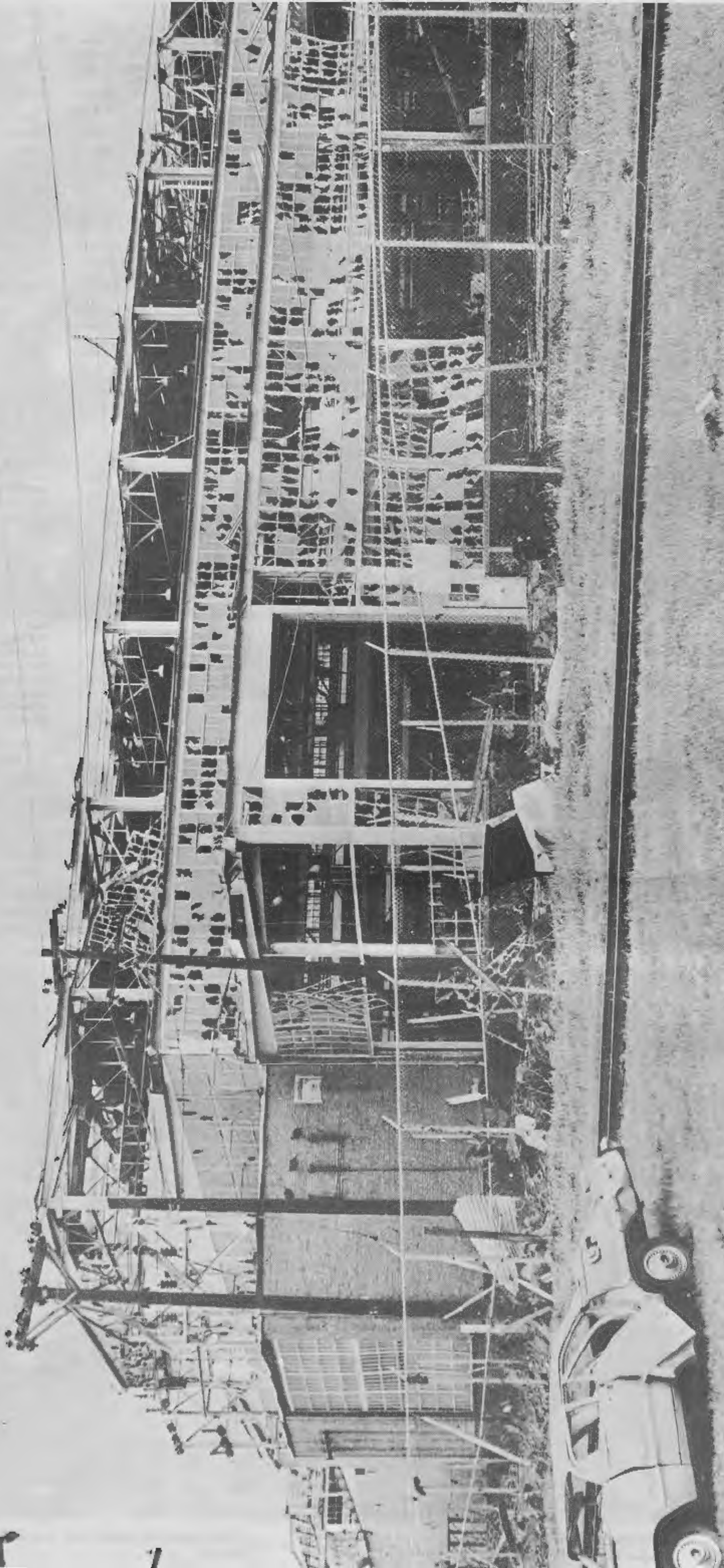
Two lumber yards were selling materials to themselves after their buildings were blown apart. Spring Lake Park Lumber and Fridley Lumber both sustained extensive



VICTIMS COMFORTED as they rested in the Spring Lake Park roller rink after losing their homes. Red

Cross provided coffee and first aid supplies for the station.

Recordland's Biggest Industry Staggers Under 'Double Strike'



NORTHERN ORDNANCE, Fridley, largest single industry in the Recordland area, was hit twice by the tornadoes and its buildings were severely damaged. Estimates of the destruction to buildings and equipment vary between \$3 and \$5 million. Most of the firm's production is in government contracts.



YOU SAID IT



BY GASLIGHT Governor Karl Rolvaag orders out the National Guard when he visited Fridley and Spring Lake Park hours after the storm.



WIFE MISSING, this man came home from work at 8 p.m. and was unable to find his family. He checked with neighbors, looked through the rubble and examined every victim list. At 3 a.m., when this photo was taken, he was desperately looking under the remains of his home with the aid of guardsmen. A few minutes later, the highway patrol located his wife and children, safe with relatives in Brooklyn Center.

Terror, Suffering, Fear; Worst Part of Tornadoes

"The worst part was hearing the screaming," was the comment of one tornado survivor in Spring Lake Park. He was referring to the women and children yelling for help as they were trapped in their basements.

Another recalled how he found a boy in his front yard, both legs skinned to the bone from the knees down. He couldn't take the boy for help because his car was blocked by his collapsed garage.

When he finally found a neighbor with a car and got out to the highway, he had to flag down a patrolman. This was the first anyone knew the twister had hit Lois Drive in Mounds View.

Four were found dead on this street alone.

At 1 a.m., a woman, clasping a baby, stumbled into the Spring Lake Park Roller Rink first aid station. She had walked since the twister, looking for help.

Her stocking-type slippers were worn out and her feet swollen. She handed her carefully cared-for child to a nurse, and then collapsed to a bench.

A ten year old boy was lost all night. He walked back to his blown out home at 10 a.m., unharmed and more than welcomed.

A husband came home from work, found his wife and two children gone. The house had all

but completely blown away.

Neighbors knew nothing of his family. Checking the victim lists at the disaster center gave no clue. They weren't at any hospital.

He was still looking at 8 a.m. The National Guard helped him take apart his home, board by board. Each piece of cloth, or article of clothing uncovered, at first appeared to be a body.

All turned out well in this case. The Highway patrol located the family at a distant relative in Brooklyn Center.

There were many more stories of heartbreak, fear and suffering that occurred during Recordland's blackest hour.



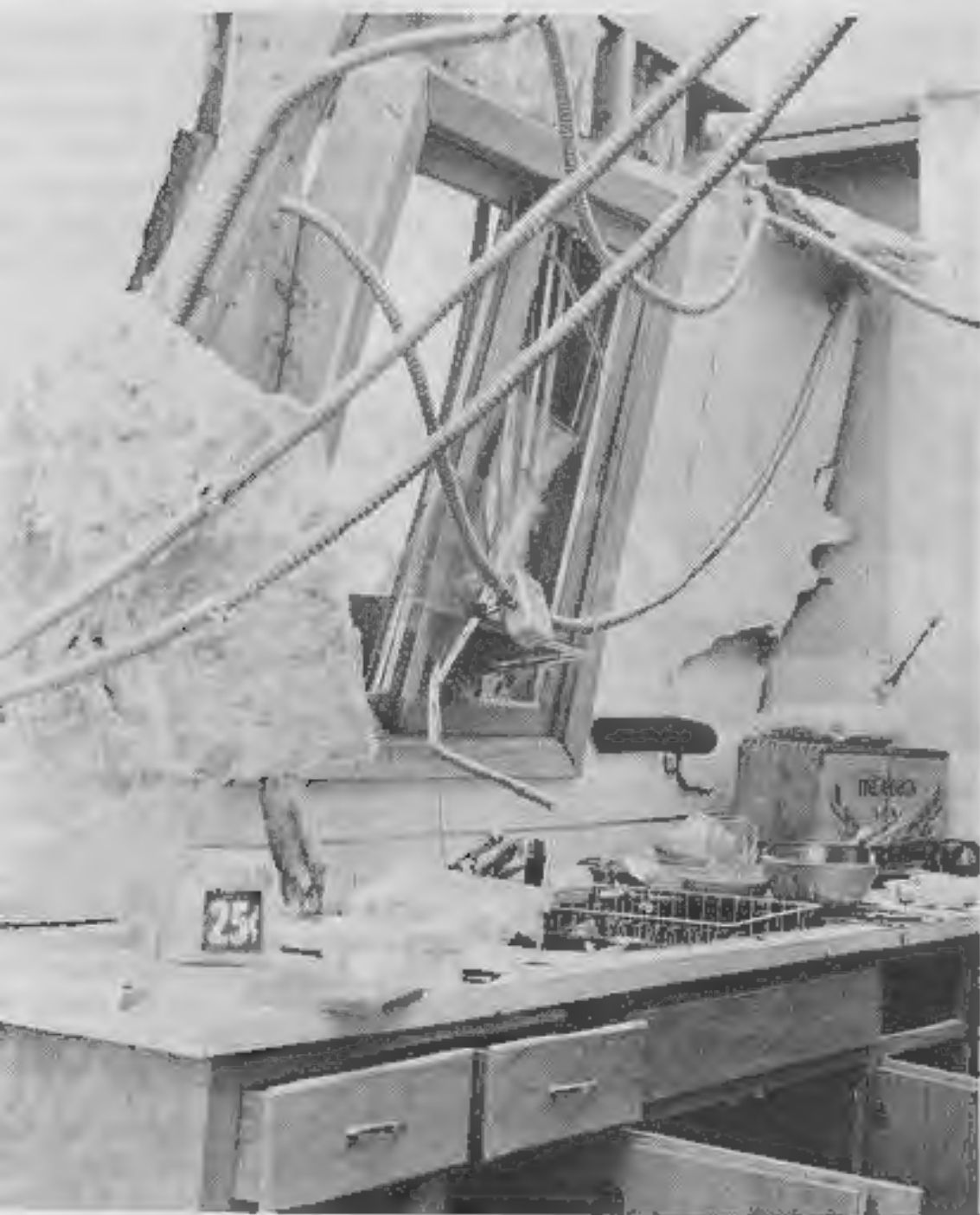
SURVIVORS WERE AIDED at the Spring Lake Park emergency station by doctors and Red Cross personnel and volunteers. The husband assists with the

two small children as the exhausted mother rests in the background.

After the Storm — Utter Devastation



THIS CLOCK on a school room wall had stopped at 7:10.



A 25 CENT LOAF OF BREAD was probably as valuable as anything else in this kitchen.



AN INDICATION of the storm's fury was found in the "stepladder" effect of this wall where concrete blocks had been ripped out as if by design.

When the sun rose Friday morning following the storm utter devastation greeted those who had survived the rigors of the night before.

By this time the National Guard had been mobilized and, working with area law enforcement groups, the stricken areas had been sealed off from sightseers, looters and opportunists.

The Record of May 12 had this to say about the storm's aftermath:

Storm Hits Mounds View, Fridley, Spring Lake Park

The fastest growing area in the state was delivered a stunning blow last Thursday when a series of four tornadoes cut through four communities.

Fridley, Spring Lake Park and Mounds View took the brunt of the damage while Blaine had a lesser amount. Whipping, sucking winds, followed by driving rain and giant hail made thousands homeless and wiped out a large share of the areas' industry and commerce.

Four different twisters touched down in the area, each cutting wide swaths. Death, pain and total destruction of property filled their paths.

Two of the area's largest employers, the FMC Corporation with a payroll of 2000 and Midland Cooperatives with 800, were badly damaged. Several other industries were struck which may affect the employment picture for the region.

Retail business and other commercial enterprises suffered huge losses. Many stores and two shopping centers were completely knocked out.

Government buildings and property sustained millions of dollars in damage. School districts in Fridley and Spring Lake Park were the hardest hit with the cost estimated at \$10 million.

Private utilities were seriously damaged. Sixteen thousand phones were placed out of service. Electric power, and natural gas service was interrupted for as long as a week to some areas.

The greatest damage in terms of personal loss was to the residents. In Fridley, 425 homes were totally demolished and another 1099 damaged.

Spring Lake Park had 149 homes totally destroyed and 147 damaged. About 30 per cent of the residences were affected.

In Mounds View, 86 homes were totally destroyed and a hundred more damaged. Mounds View had the highest fatality total with five, while Fridley and Spring Lake Park each reported two deaths.

Hundreds were injured. All local emergency facilities were taxed to the maximum. The new Mercy Hospital was pressed into full scale service.

The National Guard was activated and four units totaling 500 men were sent to the area. The affected regions were sealed-off from sightseers and opportunists.

Hundreds of volunteers were called upon

to aid. First they assisted with the wounded, later in the search for the missing. For days, volunteers have assisted with clean-up.

Volunteers with special skills and training were over-taxed. Volunteer firemen gave every available hour. Civil Defense personnel from the affected communities and Columbia Heights worked endlessly.

Amateur radio operators set up a communications network and manned several stations for five days. Taxi drivers volunteered their vehicles.

The less skilled donated thousands of hours in labor - cleaning debris, guarding buildings and directing traffic.

Public employees have had little rest since the storm. The Minnesota Highway Patrol set-up a command post in Spring Lake Park. When officers aren't on regular patrol, they have served to direct traffic and serve as guards in the disaster area.

Anoka and Ramsey county sheriff's departments were pressed into immediate service with the first word of the big blow. First in aiding victims and later in coordinating of activity, the sheriff's deputies have been most busy.

Local police provided much of the early emergency service in aiding victims. They have constantly served in the capacity of guarding the region. Cooperation between communities was outstanding.

Municipal maintenance and utility crews were pressed into overtime duty. All equipment has been kept in constant use. First streets were opened and later the general clean-up was begun.

School employees, students and many volunteers have aided in getting school buildings cleaned-up and supplies salvaged. Only a few days of school will be missed because of the efficient action.

Hundreds of persons have donated equipment and materials to aid in getting the area back on its feet. Heavy equipment, dump trucks, front-end loaders and plain old fashioned shovels have been offered.

The Red Cross and Salvation Army were some of the first on the scene and have yet to leave. They are providing meals for volunteers, clothes and other supplies for victims and a place to stay for the homeless.

Utility companies sent in extra crews. Eight hundred telephone workers were involved. Northern States Power brought in crews from as far as Wisconsin.



THIS CHILD'S TEDDY BEAR was a grim reminder of all that was left of a once peaceful and happy home.



ANOKA COUNTY AIRPORT bore silent witness to the fury of the storm with planes ripped apart and tossed helter skelter. Some were damaged beyond repair.



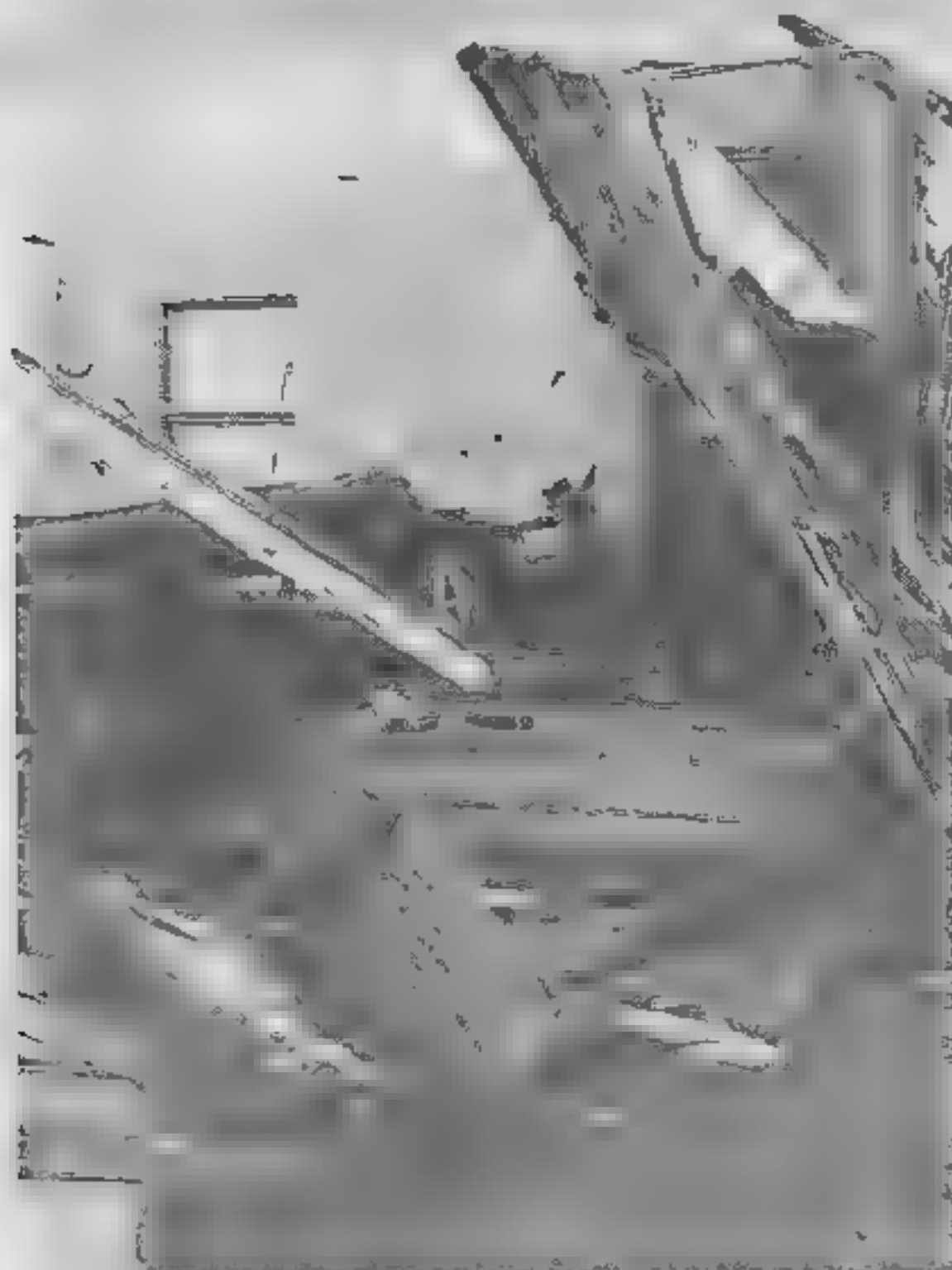
BOB PRICE searched the ruins of his home in an effort to salvage clothing and valuables.



PRECIOUS LITTLE was left to salvage in the rubble of what had been a new, modern home the night before.



THIS HAD BEEN A BEDROOM



TWISTED WALLS and debris from goodness knows where made this property a total loss



THIS AUTOMOBILE was picked up and dumped unceremoniously in a neighbor's basement.



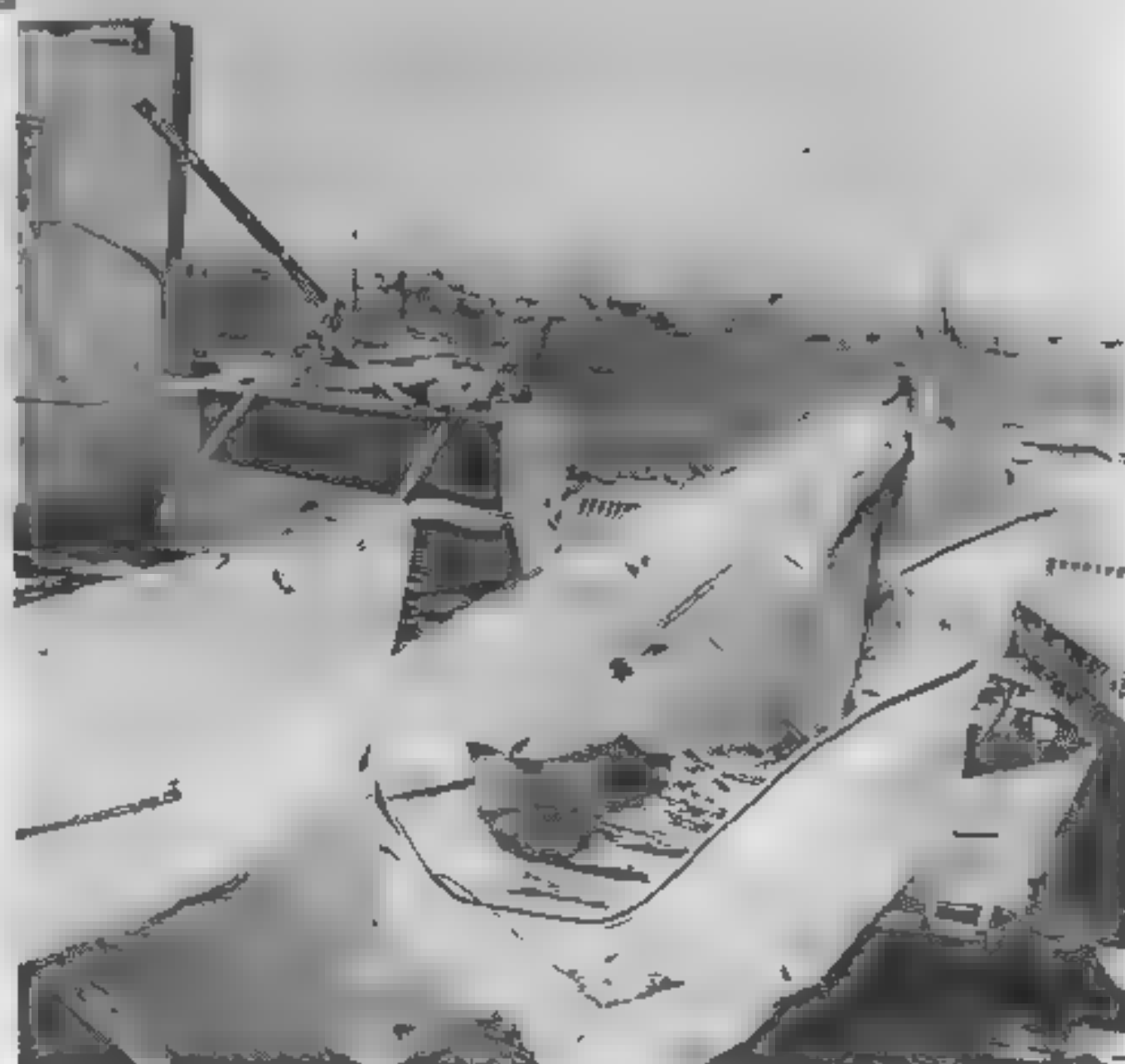
WATER-FILLED BASEMENTS served to further dampen the spirits of those who had suffered loss.



NICE CATCH of a ball was made by a power pole. It was one of the few poles left standing in the center of Spring Lake Park.



SOME COMMUNICATION systems remained intact despite the havoc wrought all around them.



THIS HAD BEEN A BOAT



THERE WAS HUMOR, TOO, like this sign in the window of the badly-damaged Market Center in Spring Lake Park.



STILL USABLE, though completely lacking in privacy, was this bathroom fixture.



GUARDSMEN WERE PRESSED into service during the night to aid in the search for disaster victims who might be buried in the debris.



BOYS ENJOY TRYING ON clothes when all they have are buried in the rubble of their demolished home. Roger, 12, and Jerry, 9, pick out new jackets from clothing brought to the shelter at Redeemer Lutheran church, Fridley. Looking on are Pastor Arnold Stone and the boys' mother, Mrs. Edwin Peterson

Manager's House Swept Away

"After the first tornado went through only the garage was damaged", said City Manager Earl Wagner, and I thought the storm had been nothing more than a nuisance."

"It was fortunate, however, because I could not get the car out. If I could have I would have been down at the city hall when the second one hit," said Wagner.

When the second one did come we were all gathered in the basement and the house began to wrench and creak. The pressure on your ears was really

quite strong and the noise of the tornado can be compared to a freight train, said Wagner.

"All I could say was 'go go' I wanted the house to be swept away rather than have it continue to wrench on the foundation caving in pieces of concrete on us," Wagner stated.

The house finally did go, entirely and the Wagners suffered little more than cuts and bruises.

"We will probably rebuild on the same site but not use the same floor plan, my wife was never satisfied with this one," said Wagner



AREA PEACE OFFICERS were kept busy throughout the eventful night directing rescue efforts and channeling help to places where it was most needed.



↑
 ANYTHING OF VALUE was salvaged as friends and neighbors joined in the task of searching the ruins.

→
 ONCE A NEAT, well-kept street intersection, this Fridley corner was a picture of woe when the sun dawned on a new day



↓
 GOOD NEWS for those who might be looking for this family was contained in this "We OK" message scratched on the outside wall where all might see.



KEROSENE LAMPS were pressed into use at the Spring Lake park Roller rink when temporary relief facilities were set up the night of the storm. Minnesota highway patrolmen assisted in the task of giving aid to the injured and registering those who had been separated from their families



AN EXAMPLE of the force of the tornado — as well as its freakishness is shown in this two by four which apparently had been snapped in two, then hurled into the air to crash with sufficient force to drive it through the roof of this home.

RUINS EVERYWHERE greeted those who entered this Fridley area the next day. Notice that trees which remained standing had been completely stripped of foliage.






SEARCHING THE DÉBRIS became an almost endless task as every bit of wreckage was combed in the hope that something of value might be salvaged. Looting became a temptation but careful screening of those who entered the stricken area held this to a minimum



WALLS STOOD while roofs blew off and trees were uprooted as the twisters methodically whirled through Recordland with no particular pattern to follow except the whim of violent nature

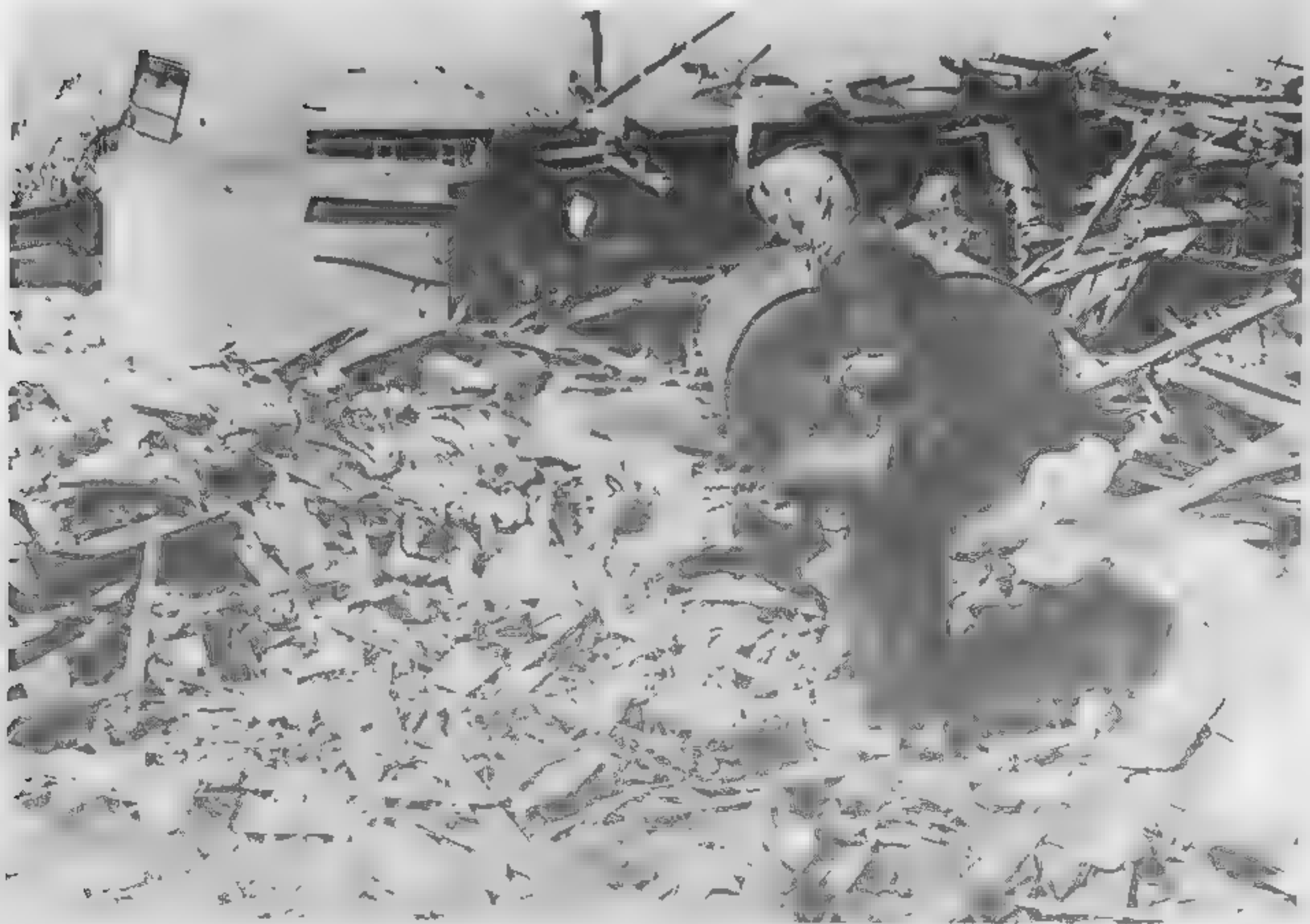
THIS BOAT came from goodness knows where and wound up a twisted mass of metal in a school room





KP DUTY, while not enjoyed, was still a part of the job of national guardsmen

A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING, including stripped trees was deposited beside what remained of this Fridley home.



16

WHERE DO I START? This seems to be the thought of this lady as she views the mess which hours before had been her basement.



NO ROOF but a chance to sit down

ALL WRAPPED UP in a window frame.

UNSCATHED WAS this station wagon in spite of the damage to the house.





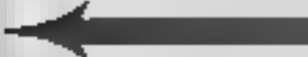
ROOFS WERE BLOWN helter skelter, sometimes landing blocks away from their original mooring places.

IT LOOKS LIKE slim pickings for these ladies attempting to salvage something useful from a tremendous mess.

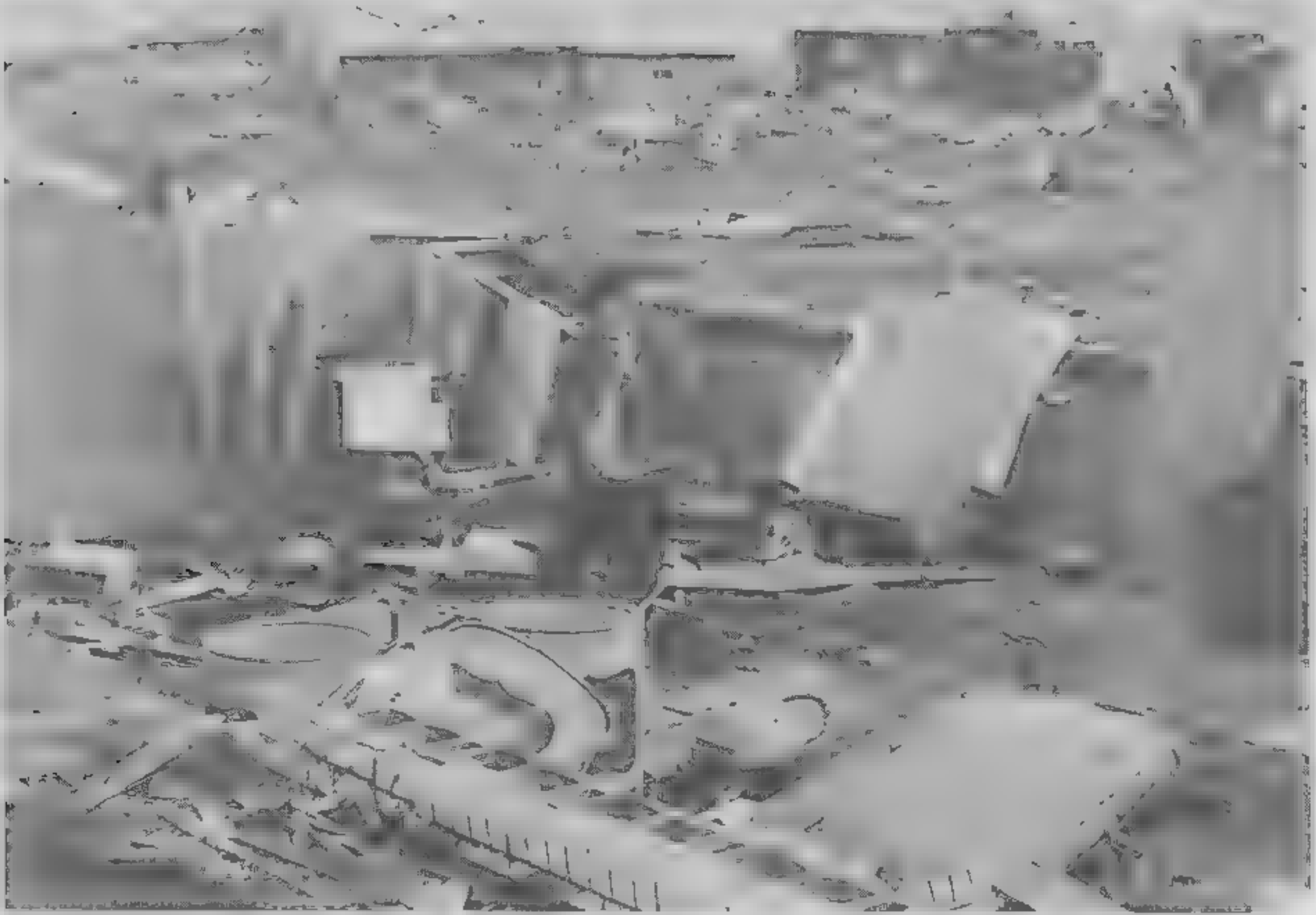


ONLY A FOUNDATION remained salvageable in this Recordland home.

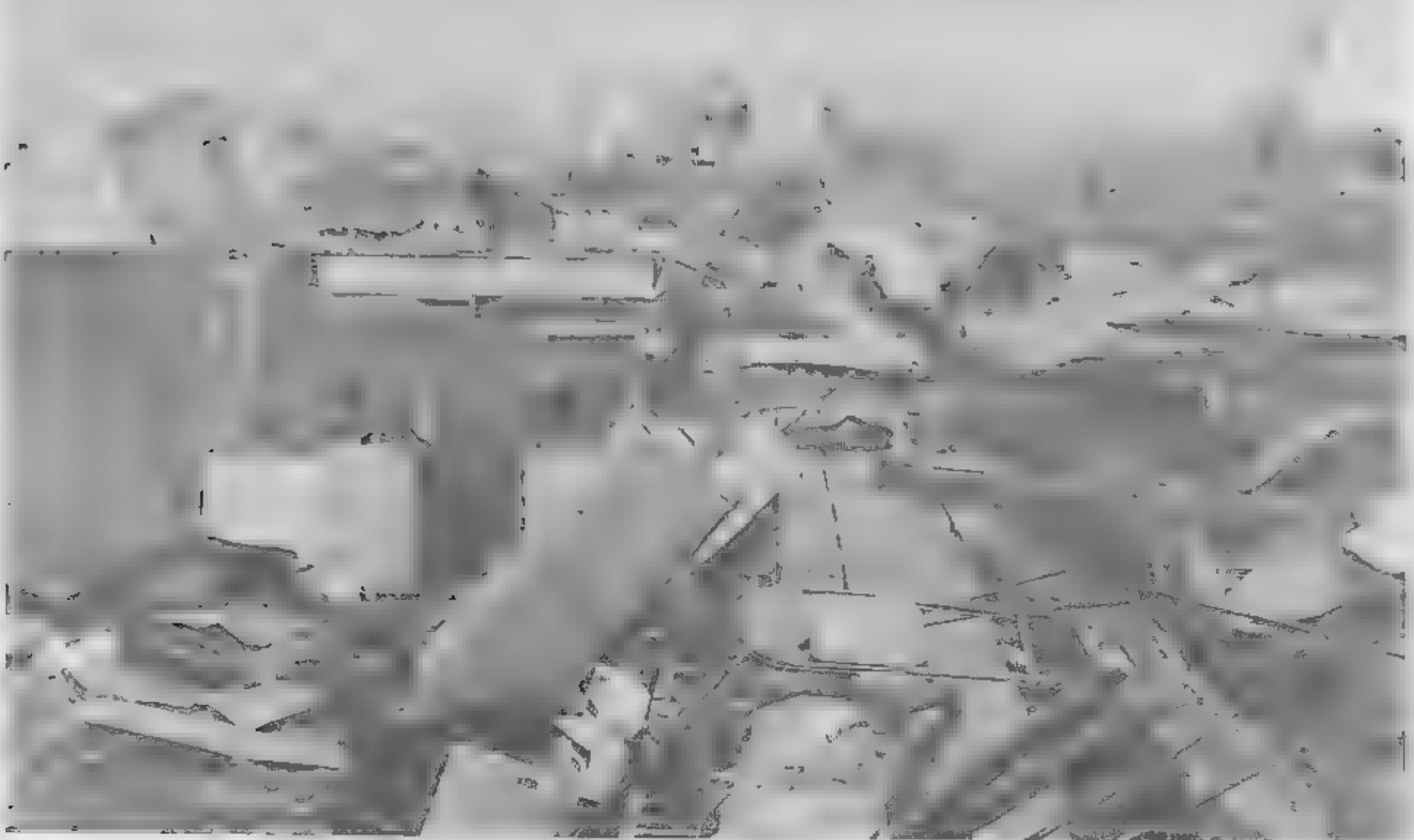
LIKE A PROUD SENTINEL
this water tower in Spring
Lake Park, undamaged
by the winds, looks down
on the destruction



A HODGE PODGE of wal's
and ruins was all that was
left of this house in Fridley



A LOT OF NOTHING was dumped into all that remained of this
basement



THIS SIDE OF THE STREET bore the brunt of the twister while
houses across the way had little or no damage.



"IT JUST FELL IN" was the way the owner of this home described the way the walls and interior furnishings descended on his basement.



LIVING UP TO ITS NAME was this wallboard which withstood the onslaught, though well peppered with gashes from flying debris.



"NOT MUCH LEFT," seems to be the thinking of this couple as they view the complete destruction of what had been their happy home



A COLLISION between this refrigerator and automobile wound up with neither winning.



EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH was swept away when the twister struck this devastated area in Mounds View.—Photo courtesy the Argus.



HARDLY THE BEST PLACE for a comfortable snooze was this mattress which wound up atop a car.



THERE WERE NO TAKERS for this sign the morning after the night before.



ALL BUT OBLITERATED from view was this automobile after everything from window frames to building blocks landed atop its body

IT SERVES PANDORA RIGHT—She never should have opened that box!—Argus photo.





THIS TRAILER COURT in Fridley suffered heavy damage.



BLACK CLOUDS LOOMED the day following the tornadoes causing many to fear a repetition of the disaster but this boy, cautioned to remain calm, did just that in the face of impending disaster





THE FREAKISH PATH of the tornado is graphically illustrated by this aerial view of the Lois drive section of Mounds View where several met their deaths.



"AT LEAST WE'LL HAVE SHEETS," is the conclusion of this little housewife as she salvages what little is left



ONE OF MANY "Bargain Basements" where the merchandise was of questionable value



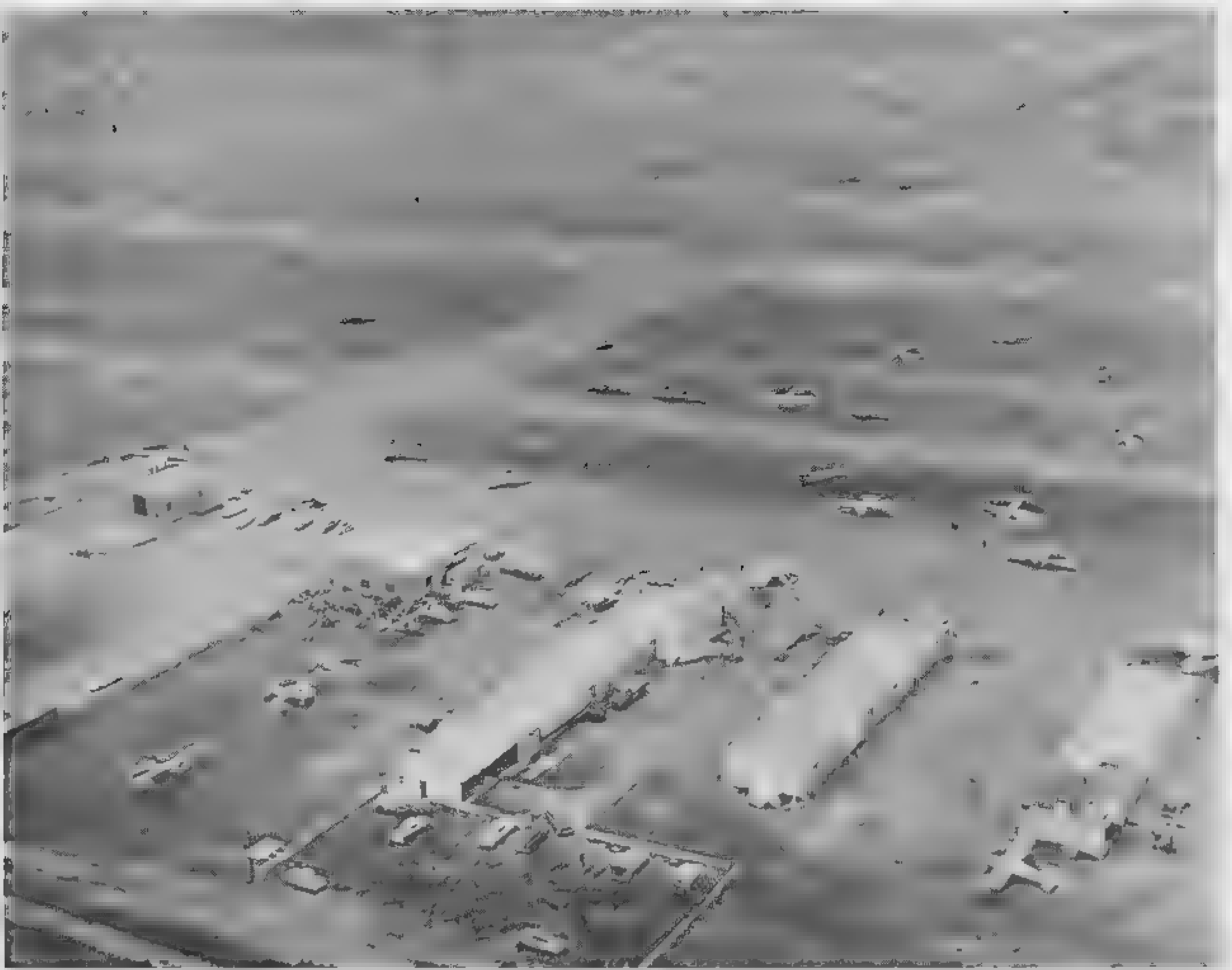
A MATTRESS from a child's crib (arrow) was driven through the side of the Volkswagen station wagon in one of the tornado's freakish aspects. —Argus photo.



LIKE SOMETHING out of Tobacco Road was the side entrance to this home with litter scattered everywhere

WHAT HAPPENED to the middle drawer?





PLANES WERE EVERYWHERE at Anoka County airport, many badly damaged, as the intense winds ripped them from their safe moorings near the hangars.

THE CAB of this truck was completely ripped off the chassis, and in addition, a camper attached was never found.— Argus photo.



Industry Crippled By Blow

Industrial losses due to Thursday's tornadoes will run into millions of dollars and may result in serious unemployment problems for the region.

The FMC corporation (Northern Pump) estimates damage up to 5 million dollars. K. K. Knutson, controller, says most of the 2100 workers will be back in two weeks.

Damage to the plant was extreme. Window breakage was extensive. Roofing displaced permitted severe damage from rain and hail.

The twister itself shifted several pieces of heavy machinery. The machine shop was extensively damaged when a railroad box car was thrown through the wall.

Midland Cooperative suffered from \$1 to \$2 million in damage. The storm hit at the peak season for the farm supply firm.

Midland is currently looking for warehouse space to replace many cubic feet lost to the tornado. The oil blending plant was put out of commission.

Petroleum storage tanks were tumbled like tin cans by hefty winds.

Aerospace Research Corporation is moving its operation to Fairmont, Minnesota to complete vital defense contracts. Their Fridley plant was totally wiped out.

Viron, Incorporated, suffered some building damage to their new building on Central Ave. Some water damage was encountered.

Shimek-Bylander cabinet shop in Blaine was completely wiped out. Lumber storage and tools were destroyed, either by the wind or rain and hail.

Wyatt Brothers ready mix cement lost a large building and garage. Damage was sustained to the elevator.

Handke grain hauling depot received wind damage.

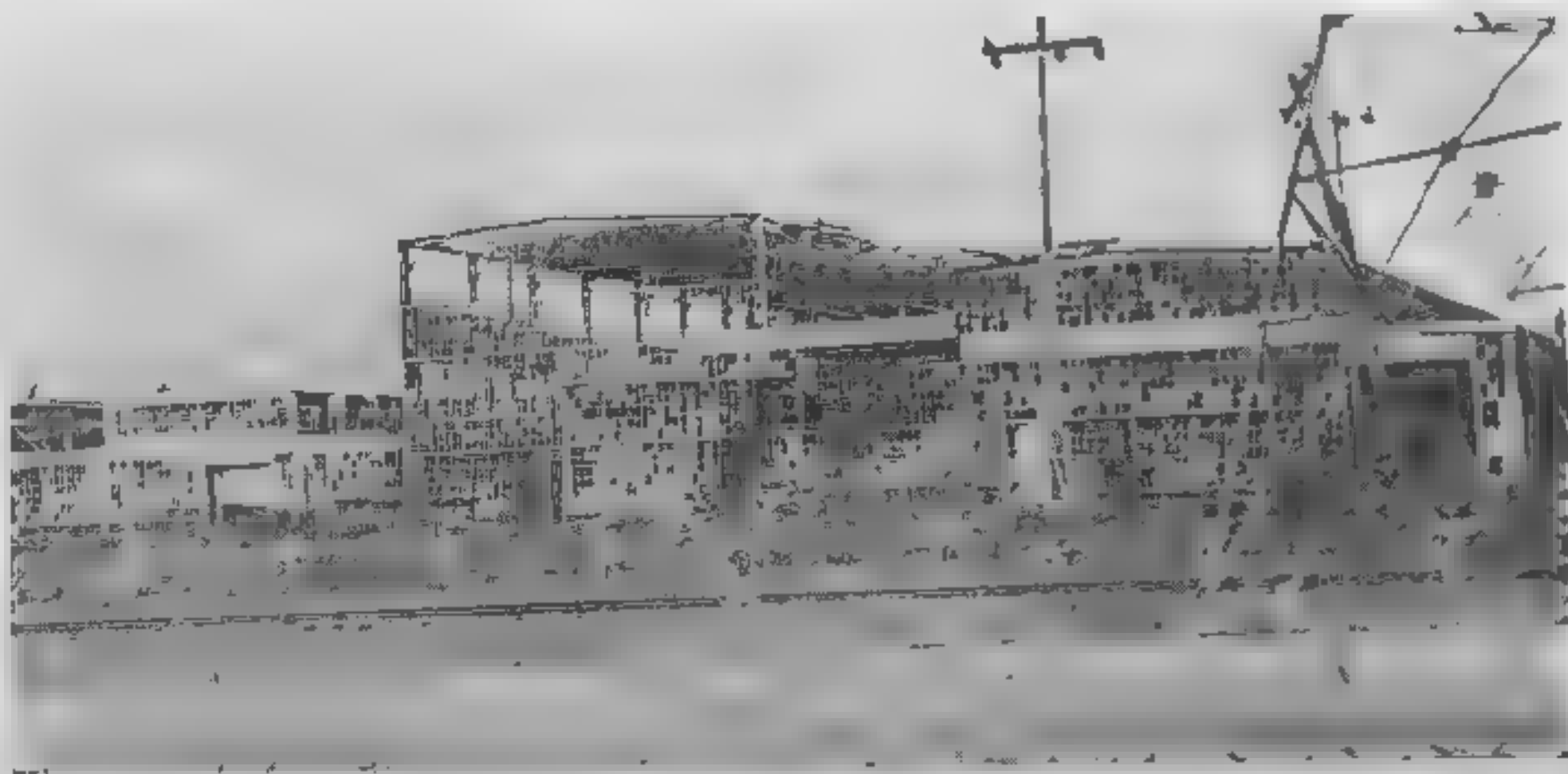
Three engineering firms were hard hit. Suburban Engineering in Fridley was completely demolished. Comstock and Davis in Spring Lake Park lost its entire quarters. Midland Consultants was affected by rain and water damage.

Northwestern Bell Telephone switching station in Blaine received building damage.

Kurt Manufacturing Co., Fridley, lost one building and was forced to cover all equipment with plastic.



EXTENSIVE DAMAGE to inventory was experienced by Midland Cooperatives when the twister ripped through their new Fridley warehouse.



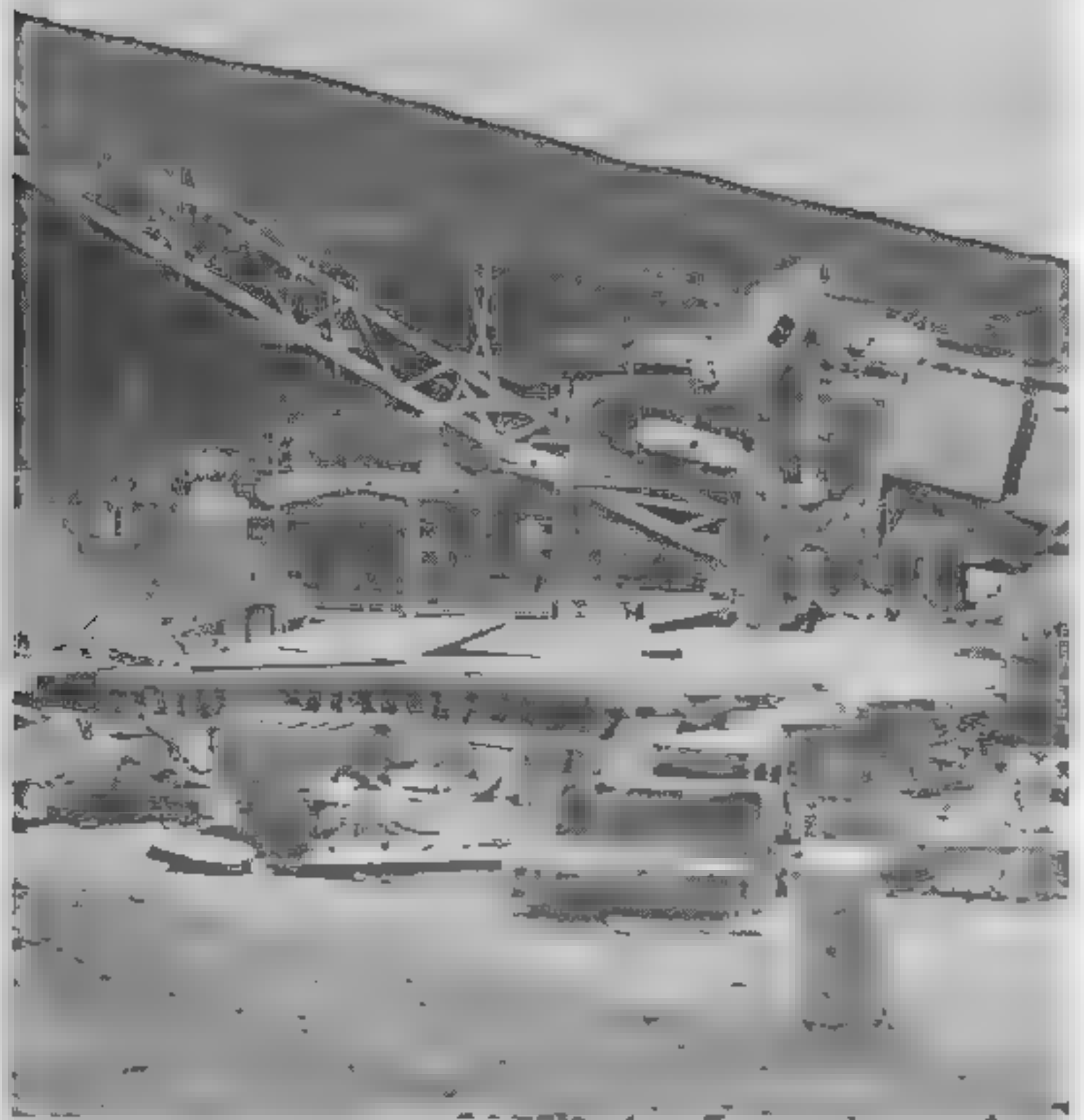
THIS VIEW of a section of the huge Northern Ordnance plant indicates the extensive damage suffered by Fridley's largest employer.



ANOTHER VIEW at Northern Ordnance shows more of the same.



THESE HUGE STORAGE TANKS were tossed about with reckless abandon as the winds hit Fridley's industrial area



STEEL AND BRICK twisted and crumbled under the terrific pressure.



POLICEMEN TAKE "A FIVE" during the long night's vigil when they were kept busy aiding the tornado sufferers and returning a semblance of normalcy to the stricken area.

Government Units Suffer \$15 Million in Damages

Damage to the Blane, Spring Lake Park, and Fridley government buildings is estimated to be well over \$10,000,000 with eight schools and one city hall badly damaged.

Spring Lake Park Superintendent of Schools E. H. Knalson estimated the damage to the Junior High school at about \$1,500,000, damage to the Senior High at \$1,000,000 and to Kenneth Hall at \$780,000. All these figures Knalson said, are for the damage to the building alone, not for the contents which in many areas were completely lost.

Fridley school damage according to Superintendent John Hansen will run around \$5 000,000 total with extensive damage to the Junior High, Senior High, Hayes elementary, Parkview elementary and Woodcrest elementary a Spring Lake Park district school in Fridley.

The Fridley Junior high suffered extensive damage to the older wing of the building, lost the major portion of its roof, most of the windows and had extensive rain damage.

The Fridley senior high school lost part of its roof and received extensive interior damage due to rain.

Hayes elementary school on Mississippi St. was totally destroyed and a new 28 classroom circular building has already been designed for the site.

Parkview elementary school immediately behind the senior high suffered roof and wind damage, heavy loss to the gym area and the kindergartens were hard hit.

Damage at Woodcrest school is almost total. Some repairs were being made to protect what's left. The school site will have to be razed and rebuilt.

Superintendent Hansen said the building addition programs planned for the junior high and Parkview will go ahead as scheduled.

Spring Lake Park grade schoolers went on split shifts Tuesday, announced Knalson and the high school students would start split shifts on Thursday.

Fridley schools will be operating on much the same schedule with the junior high schools students meeting for two hours a day, said Hansen, to prepare for finals.

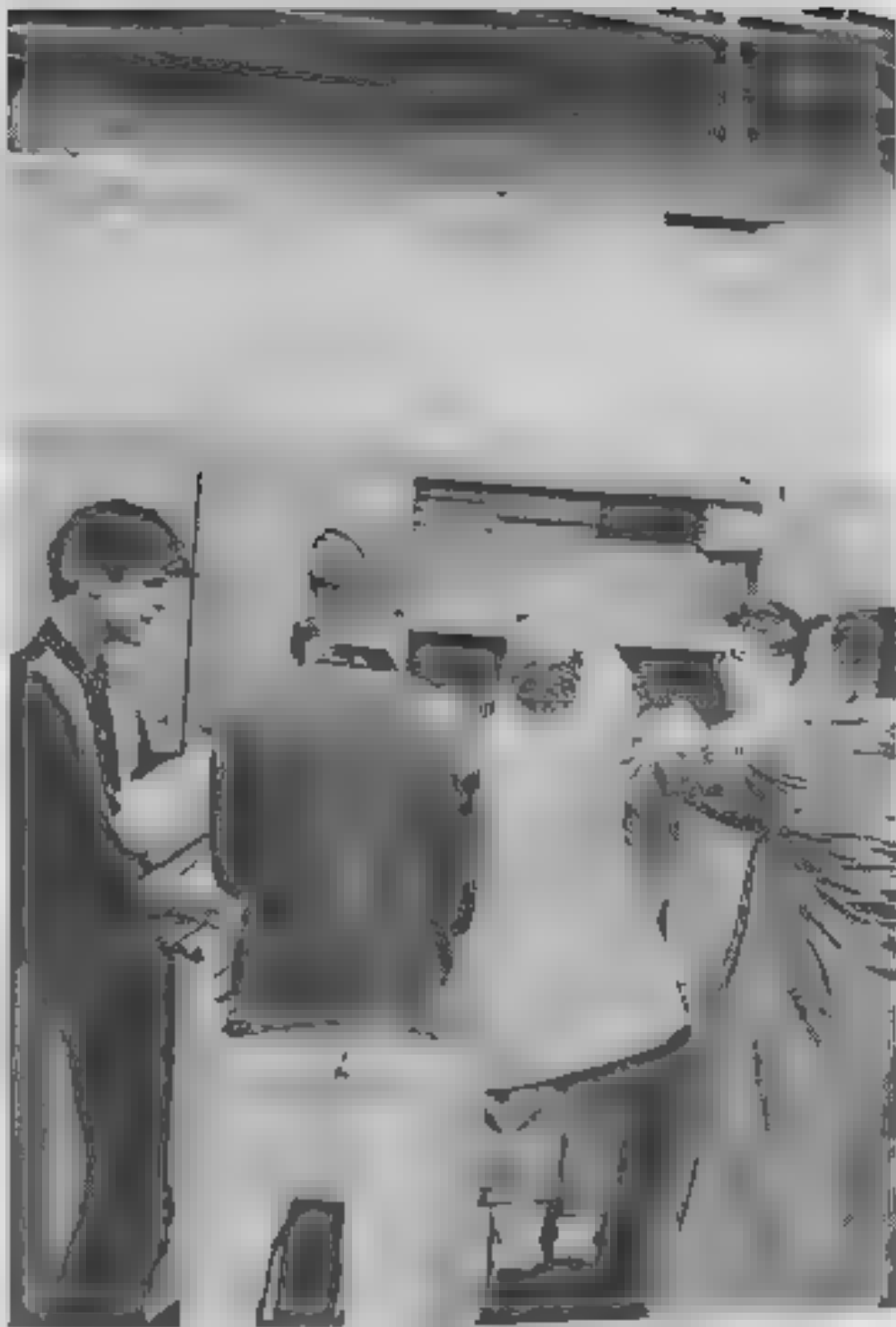
All scheduled school activities will go ahead as planned said Hansen and this includes the prom and graduation for which the school will probably have to use auditorium facilities in some neighboring school.

Representative Connie Burckett and State Senator Vernon Holm have made application in the legislature for disaster relief aid for the schools.

CITY HALL

The Fridley City Hall suffered extensive damage to the fire department garages and much city equipment. The whole rear wall of the fire department was blown out and windows in the entire building were broken in addition to interior damage due to rain.

The new civic center for which \$500,000 bonds were sold only last week will begin construction off the rear of the fire department as soon as possible promised Mayor William Nee.



WILLING WORKERS pitched in to salvage books from the library in a Spring Lake Park school building.



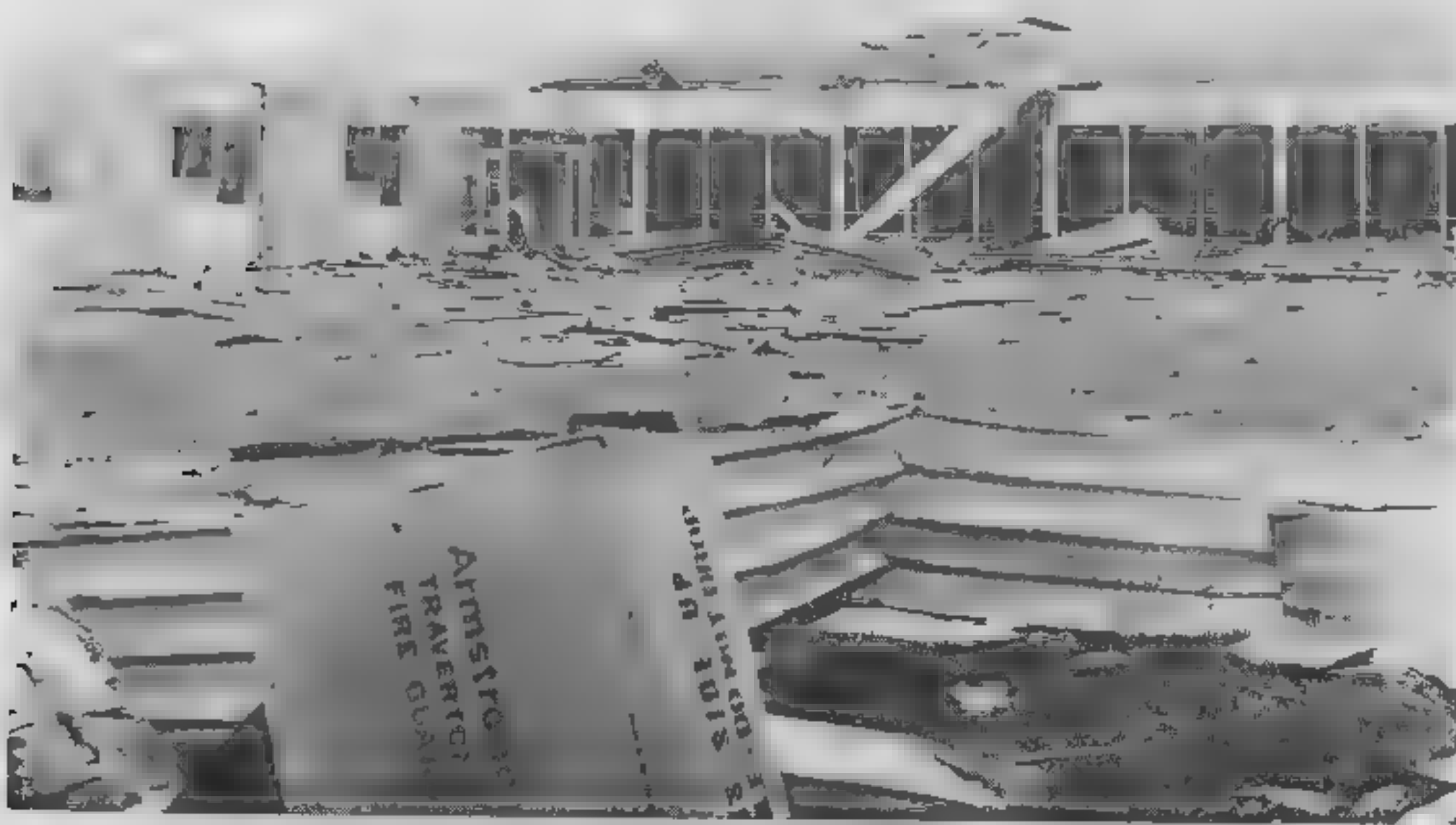
FRIDLEY'S FIRE STATION was a shambles when the next day dawned.

GUARDSMEN WERE ON DUTY in a hurry to prevent looting of the expensive equipment in the badly-damaged Spring Lake Park High school.





THE GYMNASIUM at Spring Lake Park High school resembled an open air arena when workmen set about the task of salvaging materials which might be used in the reconstruction job ahead



SURVIVING the tomado was Quack Quack (also known as hero number 1), a pet mallard hen, the mascot of biology classes at Spring Lake Park high school. The duck had lived in the courtyard (pictured above) for the past two years. Her boy friend, a newer resident to the classroom surrounded enclosure, also lived through the experience. He greeted a janitor with loud honks when the area was searched for the first time at 3 30 a.m. after the storm. The hen survived several narrow escapes during her period of captivity. She was buried under snow drifts, lived through two cold winters and was the target for arrows of vandals. Her only comment after the twister was "quack quack."

PLASTIC COVERING was pressed into service to provide protection for the valuable books in the library at Spring Lake Park High school.

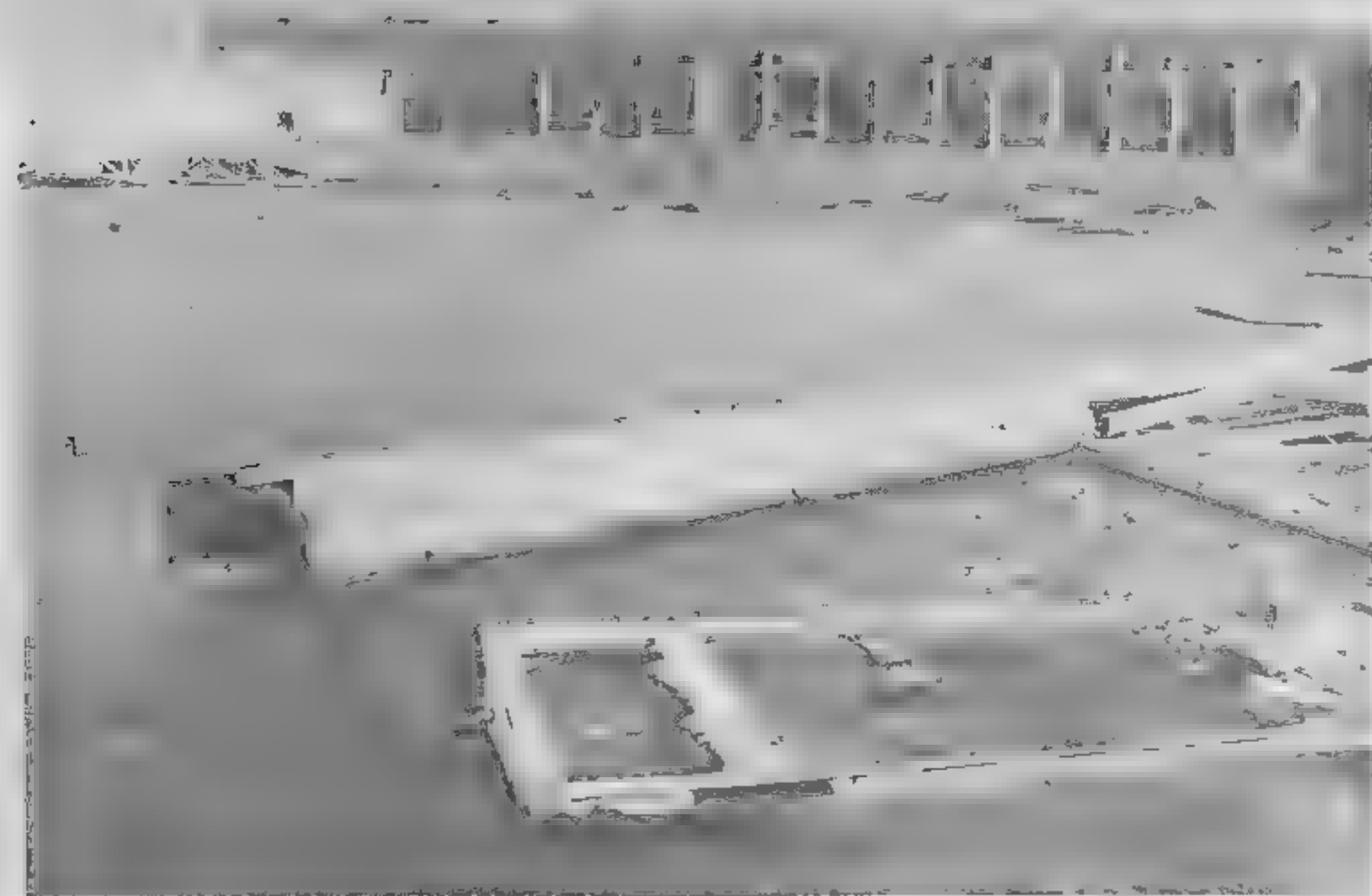




THE ROOF of this catwalk connecting two sections of an area high school came through unscathed while heavy damage occurred on all sides.

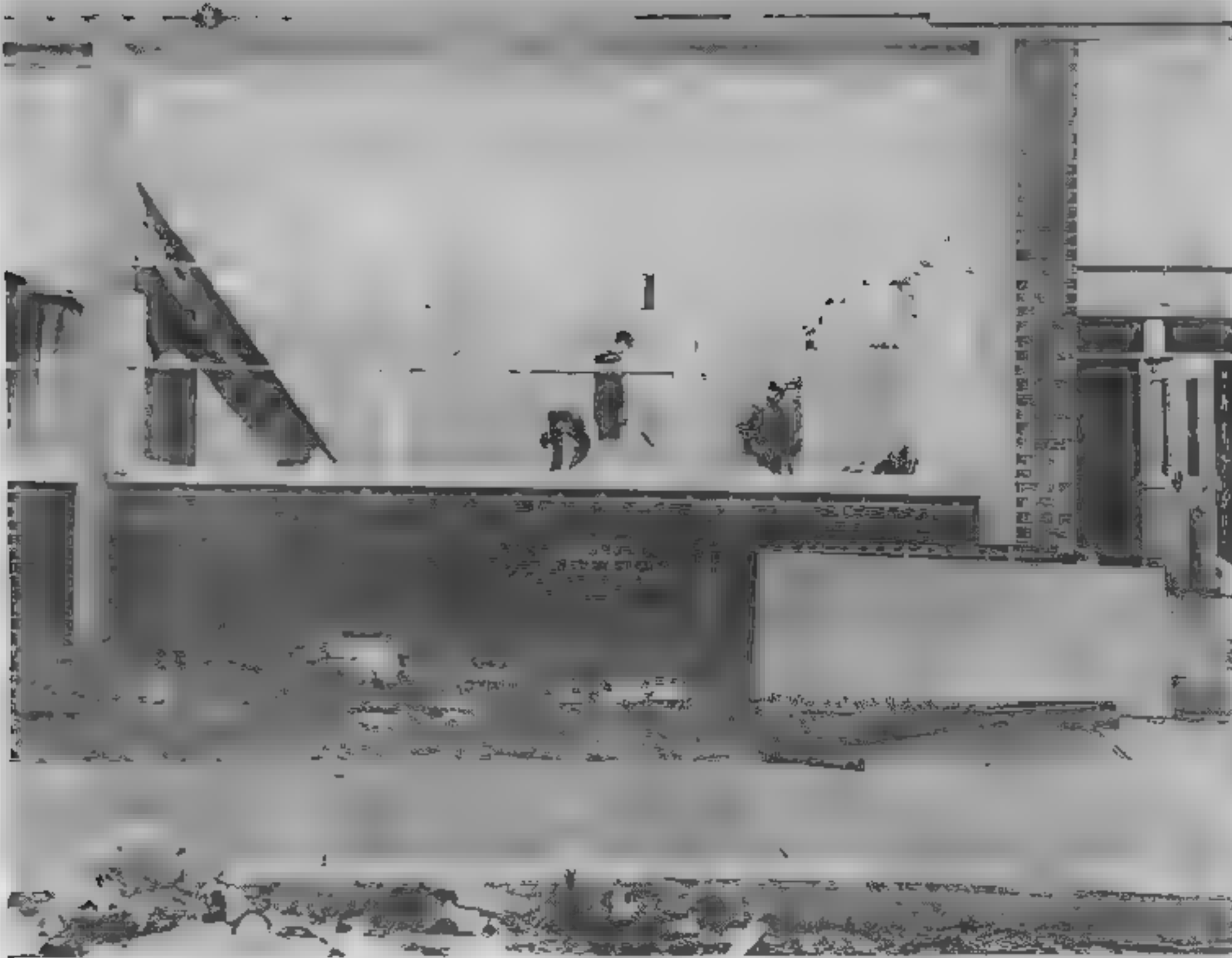


ROLLS OF PLASTIC were rushed to the scene and pressed into service to protect school equipment from the heavy rains which followed the twisters.



ONLY THE FRAMEWORK was left of this Fridley schoolhouse. Note the heavy steel beam dumped unceremoniously in foreground of this picture.

"HOW DID YOU GET THERE?" is what bothers this workman as he views a roll of something or another resting peacefully on the girders of an area school



LOTS OF SKY and plenty of fresh air were available in this classroom at Spring Lake Park Junior High school.

Storm's Black Magic Made A Room Vanish Around Them

A whole room disappeared around Robert T. Wienert and his five-year-old daughter Monica, but a cut scalp for him and a sprained ankle for her were the only injuries.

Wienert arrived home at 73rd and Lyric Lane in Melody Manor, Fridley, at 8:40 p.m. Thursday. He had been listening to storm reports on his car radio and told his wife and child to get to the basement.

They took time to collect some belongings to take with them. At the last minute, Wienert remembered his transistor radio in the family room and dashed up to get it. Monica followed him. The two had just entered the room, behind the family garage, when the walls literally sailed over their heads and into the backyard.

All that's left of the family room now is the tile floor

There is the small end table which Monica slid under when the storm knocked her down. There is the glass-paned door which fell on the table, prevented by it from striking the child. There is the overturned couch on which the wind tossed Wienert so the flying wall just grazed his head.

There was another lucky break too, in the midst of destruction. Two big trees fell on

a corner of the house, knocking down a wall on top of Monica's bed. "It hit at 7:10 exactly—that's when the clocks stopped," says Wienert. "A little later and Monica would have been in that bed."

Maybe it was the lucky things that made Wienert smile and point out the oddities of the storm. Like the bottles which were picked up and deposited again just a yard away, to-

gether and unbroken, while their wooden crates flew away to parts unknown. Like the walls lying almost intact in the backyard, while the roof disappeared completely. Like the redwood picnic table smashed flat on the patio where it stood.

He also smiled at another recollection: "The only one of the family which ever made it to the basement was the dog."

Humphrey Tours Area

After touring the area Vice-President Hubert Humphrey said "I have never seen anything like it. I've seen many disaster areas but never one as bad as this that I can remember."

"The damage I've seen is comparable to a war," said Humphrey, "and I give you my good wishes, my best hopes and my prayers."

Humphrey's tour accompanied by Governor Karl Rolvaag, Senator Walter Mondale and Mrs. Humphrey, saw by motorcade the tremendous destruction, and Humphrey expressed his desire to help relieve the agony, the loss of life and homes

Mrs. Humphrey and Governor Rolvaag who arrived almost 90 minutes prior to the Vice-President who was touring by helicopter, the Minnetonka area, shook hands and chatted with approximately 100 residents who had gathered at the Fridley Commons to see the dignitaries.

SENATOR HUMPHREY took time out to assure some of the youthful members of his audience that Uncle Sam would do all in his power to help mommy and daddy recover from the effects of nature's rampage.



MRS. CONNIE BURCHETT, Anoka county representative in the state legislature, toured the area, as did other officials shown here, left to right, Fridley Mayor William Nee, State Senator Vern Harum, Mrs. Burchett, State Civil Defense Director Charles Halsted and Governor Karl Rolvaag



VIEWING THE DAMAGE with Mayor Nee are Senator Walter Mondale, Senator Eugene McCarthy and Harold Galloway, assistant director of the Small Business administration.

Governor Rolvaag Surveys Damage

Governor Karl Rolvaag in a helicopter survey Friday afternoon viewed shattered homes and shattered communities left in the wake of the disastrous tornadoes of the night before.

News reporters accompanied the governor in an Army helicopter and two Navy helicopters, and also along were Army and civil defense officials who commented they "hadn't slept since the flood."

The sober-faced and somewhat tired looking governor - who had been out until 3.30 a.m. that morning going through areas hit by the tornadoes - looked down at the incredible waste of debris and rubble, big trees uprooted, telephone poles toppled, and once lovely homes smashed.

The 'copter circled and banked so the governor could get a good look at the 100 trailers rolled around, flattened and demolished in a trailer park and

at the airplanes at the Anoka County airport flipped upside down, standing on noses and crumpled.

The governor saw the wrecked schools in Fridley and Spring Lake Park, he pointed out to those in the helicopter one area in Mounds View where 74 houses were hit, 50 of them destroyed, with the scene looking like a mess of broken matchsticks from the air, and a house here and there still standing roofless exposing the cubicle rooms like a doll-house.

The governor who landed in Spring Lake Park to meet with local officials to plan relief action and was met by Sen. Vern Holum called the destruction staggering and devastating.

The people around the little shopping center at Highways 65 and 10, center of the disaster area, seemed grateful to see the governor of Minnesota.



ADDING UP a preliminary estimate of damage is Fridley Mayor William Nes while Governor Rolvaag looks on.



JOANN Hatland, Fridley city employee, works by kerosene lamp to relay messages during the long night of the storm.



SENATOR WALTER MONDALE, who flew here from Washington to inspect the tornado damage, tells a crowd assembled in Fridley commons that he will do all in his power to insure prompt federal aid to disaster sufferers.

A LOOK OF CONCERN shows on the face of Senator Eugene McCarthy as he stands in the midst of desolation and discusses the tremendous task of rehabilitation with Mayor William Nee of Fridley



At Least It Was Something To Do

Andrew Veres planted flowers in the front yard of his ruined Fridley home Friday morning. Then he leaned on his shovel and wept.

The yellow chrysanthemums made a brave blotch of color amid the desolation on the 5600 block of NE 4th St. Thursday's tornadoes which tore off the roof and toppled the living room wall of the large Veres home, also knocked the blossoms out of their pot.

"It just broke my wife up," explained Veres, "so I decided to plant them. Maybe they'll grow."

The solid brick wall which enclosed the oversize living room won't grow back, however. It is part of the big house that Veres, his wife and their four daughters built literally by hand over a period of five years.

"You see these bricks," he pointed. "they are all used bricks and we washed every one of them. We started this house eight years ago. I had six heart attacks, but we got it finished by ourselves. Now we don't know what we'll do."

The fallen wall crushed most of the furniture in the Veres living room -- furniture the family had just finished paying for. In the driveway is a new Volkswagen bus, purchased last Wednesday.

"I had this just one day," Veres said. "My wife got \$100 deductible insurance on it and I asked her why she didn't get \$50 and she said, oh, nothing's ever going to happen to it." The bus runs, but one side is badly dented and the windows are shattered.

Nature's tragedy is nothing new to Veres. A brother died in Ohio seven years ago when a live wire knocked down by a storm fell on his car and electrocuted him.

Two other brothers and Veres' mother still live in Hungary, from which he emigrated and whose accent he still carries in his speech. He was planning to go back to work in his paint and decorating business this year and save enough to visit the old country. Now that dream too is gone.

Veres pointed to the place where the roof beam of his home had been. "It was big. I found my roof two blocks away. These modern houses aren't that big, so I knew it was mine."

"Where you're supposed to use 2x4's, I used 2x6's. I built this house strong."



HUMPHREY TOOK TO THE AIR to express his dismay at the havoc which had been wrought and to assure residents of the stricken area that he would use his offices to secure prompt federal aid.



WHY IS HE digging in when everyone else is digging out?

... and There Was the Human Side

The wake of the storm left countless instances of human pathos, tragedy, friendship and remembrance as evidenced by these stories, mostly from the May 12 issue of The Record

Family Bounces, Lands Safely

Fridley policeman Robert Ross who lives in the Fridley Terrace trailer court said he had just left home when the tornado struck.

He was driving down highway 65 and the winds picked up the car and set it down in a different position three or four times.

It was not until almost an hour later that Ross could get back to the trailer court and his home to see if his wife and baby were alright.

Although the trailer was tipped almost upside down his family was safe and were staying in a neighbors home, one of the few remaining standing.

Ross said he has insurance, on the trailer home, but there's never enough.

Now What?

"There wasn't much damage to the house we are living in now on 87th Ave. NE., but they (Charlie Johanson) had just put up the framework on our new house on Rice Creek Terrace and now it, along with all those beautiful trees, are gone", said Gwen Samuelson.

"Now we are not sure what we are going to do," said Mrs. Samuelson. "I guess we will just wait and see what happens."

This, in many cases summed up the feelings of struck residents who planned to rebuild but were first concerned with clearing the debris.

Three Feet Is Close Enough

"Three feet is as close as I ever want to get to a twist-er", said young Gary Sweet, 5881 W. Moore Lake Dr.

Gary was one of a large number of kids attending the school art fair in the Junior high school when the tornado struck.

"We saw it about 10 miles away," said Gary, "and watched it approach. I wasn't scared until a piece of a wall fell down within three feet of me."

A close friend and former neighbor of Mrs. LaVila Abraham spoke a simple epitaph for her after attending the funeral for the tornado victim and her two small daughters Monday afternoon in St. Cloud.

"Her family was her interest," said Mrs. Gilbert (Arlene) Bartylla of Columbia Heights. "She spent nearly all her time with her children."

The Abraham family lived in the 3900 block of NE Main St., three doors from the Bartyllas, for about two years. Last fall, just before school started, they moved to a home on Lois Drive in Mounds View.

Thursday night the home blew apart and the family was separated forever. While their

Neighbor To Tragedy Can See The Cheerful Side

by Ann Pierce

"I think this thing has welded the community together. Fridley has slowed down. We take time to visit with our neighbors now."

So says Mrs. Arnold Stone, who knows firsthand how a tragedy like last week's can affect people. She is the wife of the pastor of Redeemer Lutheran church and has spent from two to 12 hours a day with the victims of, first, the Mississippi floods, and now of the tornado.

The Red Cross selected the Redeemer church basement as an official shelter. The parsonage is just across the street and Mrs. Stone has trekked back and forth as needed.

The last flood victims moved out of the shelter Wednesday. On Thursday the tornado-struck families arrived. "Ninety-nine people stayed here the first night," Mrs. Stone said. "I stripped my beds and put mats and blankets down for the children who were screaming and crying. We asked the parents if they wanted to wait until we could round up cots but they were so tired they just went to sleep on the floor."

Humor Undamaged

Of both the water and wind victims, Mrs. Stone said, "I'm so impressed with their cheerfulness and sense of humor. I think knowing they weren't the only ones sort of helped."

She recalled one destroyed home nearby which sports a huge "For Rent—Reasonable" sign. And another where owners resurrected their Christmas Santa Claus from the rubble and stood him up by a "Season's Greeting" message.

There was even some humor in the special thanksgiving service Pastor Stone conducted Sunday night in place of the usual vespers. One of the hymns which worshippers sang with special fervor was "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen."

People within and without the congregation attended the service and spoke of their experiences. One man remarked, "It took something like this to make us realize our goals were wrong. We hold down two jobs to pay for a nice house and then it all disappears in a few minutes."

"Oops, It Slipped"

A little girl in a family of

nine children said she was with her brother when the storm struck. He told her, "Don't be scared, Classy. I'm here and God's here." When the loudest noise came the child's mother told her that angels must be rolling balls in heaven. The girl said "I guess they dropped one."

Mrs. Darrell Sandberg told of her attempts to keep her own panic from her three children. "Let's ask God to take care of us and then you go to sleep," she told them. The youngsters did just that and not even the sound of destruction woke them up.

Mr. and Mrs. Don Manke, whose home was hit twice and destroyed, still showed up as scheduled to be greeters at

Disaster Strikes Double Blow in Two Directions

John Giles springs from stubborn Scotch Presbyterian stock.

From his forebears he learned that when adversity strikes the only thing to do is to jut out the chin, throw back the shoulders, take another bitch in the belt and meet the problem head-on.

Which is precisely what he did in double measure as a result of the tornadoes -- double because they struck him twice and at opposite ends of the disaster area.

His home on Lake Minnetonka was destroyed and his business in Fridley was severely damaged.

John and his wife took shelter in the basement of their Cottage wood residence on Minnetonka's shores while the walls came tumbling down. The house was completely destroyed and two automobiles took a bad beating.

Friends in the area provided shelter for the night and next morning he awoke to learn that Reserve Supply Co., the firm he heads in Fridley, had also taken it "on the chin."

Wholesalers of lumber and building materials, Reserve came to Fridley in 1962 with two modern buildings -- an

the Sunday morning worship service. Mrs. Stone said with wonder, "Many of our people who lost their homes still came as usual to teach Sundays school and be ushers. Some of them didn't have gloves or hats and some were wearing shoes from the relief, but they were there."

"Through all this, I've been thinking of the motto we've had on our church bulletin for a long time. It seems very fitting just now," the pastor's wife said.

And so it does: "To all who are weary and need rest. . . to all who mourn and need comfort. . . to all who pray and to all who do not but ought. . . this church opens wide its doors and says 'In the name of the Lord Jesus, WELCOME!'"

office and a warehouse -- in the Main St. industrial area.

Roofs on both structures had been blown off and extensive damage was done to office equipment and warehouse inventory. Rain and hail had only added to the mess.

Directing cleanup procedures became a full time job for John -- days at the office, nights and weekends at home -- but it was job which had to be done.

Reserve's operation is back to normal now, although repair work is still going on, and a new home is going up in Cottage wood. The two damaged cars have been repaired.

In the meantime Mr. and Mrs. Giles have been literally living out of their suitcases and have set their heels down at three different addresses in the interim.

They are eagerly anticipating completion of the new house and fervently hoping that a nasty thing called tornado will never again cross their paths.

And Leave The Digging To Us

Ed Peterson of Fridley has been driving a Greyhound bus between Eau Claire and Minneapolis for 17 years.

When his home at 6874 NE 7th St. disappeared in the tornado, friends from the com-

Burchett Requests Reconstruction Aid

Representative Connie Burchett was to appear before a house appropriations sub-committee Monday night seeking state loans for Fridley and Spring Lake Park school reconstruction.

Mrs. Burchett said local school officials are concerned that they would have difficulty in securing reasonable interest rates on bonds they issue now for schools.

Mrs. Burchett will ask that the two districts be made eligible to participate in the so called maximum effort fund for distressed schools in the state.

Educators Face Huge Rebuilding

By Carl Carter

"People were just wonderful," said Harry Scheff, principal of Spring Lake Park High School, about the help his school received after the tornado of May 6, which left over half of the school damaged, totally or partially.

"On Saturday following the storm, about 350 volunteers from all over the area offered their help," he said.

"People have been on the job since 8 o'clock the next morning after the tornado," said John Hansen, superintendent of Fridley's schools, in discussing his district's recovery. He said he was "optimistic" about the task ahead.

Damage in Millions

Preliminary estimates indicate tornado and water damage to the two adjoining school districts of something close to eight million dollars. One elementary school in each district was completely destroyed, Hayes, a Fridley school, and Woodcrest, in the Spring Lake Park district, located in the city of Fridley.

In both districts, two elementary schools were left undamaged -- Riverwood and Rice Creek, Fridley schools, and Spring Lake Park (Arsenal) and Blaine, Spring Lake Park schools.

While things are not back to normal, all students were in classes by Thursday, May 13, if not before, for at least part of the day. Buses are running and activities are continuing when possible.

About 97% of the Fridley High School students returned to school on Thursday and SLP principal Scheff said "enrollment was excellent" when his students were called back to classes.

Graduation ceremonies for Fridley High School are scheduled at the Brooklyn Center High School; Spring Lake Park plans to put the roof back on its gym and hold commencement there. Neither district plans to extend the school year beyond scheduled closing date.

pany gathered to lend a hand. Not just one or two friends either, but ten of them had turned out by Monday, some taking off three or four days from their jobs.

"There's nothing left to rebuild," said Peterson, having lunch with his buddies in the Red Cross shelter at Redeemer Lutheran church. "We are just going through the debris and offering the stuff to the highest bidder!"

Peterson was out on the road when the storm hit the area, and drove his bus beneath a highway overpass in Wisconsin to escape the wind. He didn't arrive home to his family until 2 a.m. Friday.

Helping him out with the big cleanup job are Harold Haymaker, long-time friend and fishing buddy, Vic Pearce and Joe Roy, all of Minneapolis; S.E. Erickson of Bloomington; Don Stinson of Long Lake; Mel Hamman of Medicine Lake; Arnold Heino of Brooklyn Center; Wilbur Teasman of Brooklyn Park; Bob Barber of Osseo and Jim Beauchaine of Orono.

Epitaph For Tornado Victim:

"Her Family Was Her Interest"

father was at work, Lori Abraham, 4, and her infant sister Lisa, one month, died with their mother in the wreckage. The three Abraham boys were all injured, one critically, and remained in three different Minneapolis hospitals while their mother and sisters were buried Monday.

Russell Abraham of Columbia Heights, brother-in-law of the dead woman, comforted her widowed father, Clarence Moen, and her husband during the rites in Holy Cross Lutheran church of St. Cloud, where the Rev. W. W. Beltz conducted the funeral. Tiny Lisa was buried in her mother's arms.

When the three Abraham boys recover sufficiently to be

transferred, Mrs. Bartylla says their father plans to move them to a St. Cloud hospital and make the family home there near both grandparents. Michael, 7, was the most seriously injured, with both legs mangled. He is still in the intensive care unit at Mercy hospital but has improved slightly and was able to eat something Sunday for the first time since the storm. Brian, 5, is in North Memorial hospital with severe cuts and lacerations. Young Scotty, 3, was not hospitalized until Saturday when he was taken to St. Mary's for treatment after his cuts became infected.

Mrs. Bartylla said, "If anybody would like to help the family, they're going to need it. He's going to need lots of money to pay those hospital bills."

The Western Suburbs Suffered, Too

Recordland was not the only area hit by the tornadoes. The western suburbs -- Chanhassen, Minnetonka, Eden Prairie, Golden Valley and others -- also suffered.

These pictures and stories from the May 9 edition of Sunday Suburban Life, another publication of Twin Cities Suburban Newspapers, Inc., tell that story:

Woman Watches Huge Tidal Waves, Funnel

by Dorothy Curtis
Guest Writer

Has anyone seen a pink house which disappeared from Island Park during the tornado?

It's absolute disappearance came to light as the casualties of humans, homes, boats and docks were added up. We watched the black clouds swirl crazily over Cook's Bay, looking toward Island Park, Lake Minnetonka.

Our home is situated on County Rd. 125 about 100 yards from Island Park. We followed the tornado's progress as it came from the southwest across the water.

We decided the best place to take refuge would be the floor of the first floor bedroom. We felt an uneasy twinge of fear every time the radio announcer repeated the Civil Defense orders to go below to the basement, since our house is a two story frame structure too close to the water table to have a basement.

Water Sucked Up

The roaring winds gathered speed and seemed to suck up the churning water into the funnel which had a wide base as it came across the water.

When the lightning lit up the sky and the angry water below we felt that the funnel would pass over us unless it touched down somewhere in its path.

We crouched on the bedroom floor, waiting tensely for what we didn't know.

I shone the flashlight on the transistor, dumbly expecting to hear it better.

Mr. and Mrs. William Downey and their two children, Mark and Sheryl, formerly of Pyallup, Wash., left their second floor apartment for safety and crouched with us on the floor.

Meanwhile nearby pontoon boats broke loose from their docks and we watched them bob wildly up and down on the lake.

As the tornado passed over us, Cook's Bay took on the proportions of the ocean with tidal waves ten to twelve feet high breaking over Co. 125 and over our front yard, a distance of 50 to 75 yards.

When the winds subsided a little we went outside to look at the damage.

Mrs. Jerome Perry, who lives next door, picked bass, crappies and bullheads from her front yard.

"They were too small to keep, so I threw them back," she said. The yard was littered with debris—a 12-foot post flew through the air and landed a foot or two from our front window.

A station wagon stopped in front of our house with all the windows broken except the windshield and had three flat tires.

The driver had seen the tornado coming while he was passing through Navarre.

He parked his car in front of the Navarre Bowling lanes and took refuge there in the basement bowling area. The driver still appeared dazed as he picked at the few pieces of glass remaining in his car windows.

He drove off limping on his three flat tires. We watched the ambulance and rescue cars make dozens of silent trips back and forth from Island Park to the Mound fire barn where an emergency station was set up.

Bathtubs Along Road

Friday morning I walked across the bridge to Island Park and saw the wreckage that used to be homes. There were roofs and whole sections of walls scattered about and masses of smashed and twisted wreckage where it was impossible to tell how many houses had been standing last night.

Bathtubs scattered along the road, clothing hanging in trees, whole trees uprooted with the bark completely stripped. And unexpectedly, a house stood completely unscathed.

Many houses completely were crushed as the tornado struck indiscriminately in a hit or miss pattern of destruction.

The victims were already trying to salvage something from the ruins. The heavy winds carried pieces and bits of furnishings into the lake.

Sheryl Downey, 12 found wedding and family pictures floating near the shore and she is drying them out, hoping to return them to the persons pictured.

Amid the confusion of the disaster's aftermath I saw an elderly gentleman, raincoat, minnow bucket and all, sitting on a half submerged dock, canopole already in the lake, proving that even a tornado doesn't drown the only of a fisherman.



TWO MAILBOXES are all that's left of two homes along Carman St. in Navarre, which was hit with a vengeance.

Ran for their Lives

Funnel Knocks Out Jaycee Volleyballers

It was a narrow escape Thursday night for a dozen members of the Hopkins Junior Chamber of Commerce.

They were assembled at the Vine Hill picnic area on Hwy. No. 7 near Christmas Lake when the tornado descended upon them.

Ronald O. Poferi of 144 eighth Ave. N., Hopkins, said the group had retreated to their cars during a rain and hail squall when suddenly "there was a noise louder than a freight train right beside you."

Funnel Approaches

The men left their cars for a better look, and saw a black funnel approaching and getting lower to the ground.

Most of them ran to an embankment nearby, seeking shelter on the lee side, but Poferi said they decided that position was too dangerous and someone shouted, "Get back to the cars."

Poferi said he ran to his car, but realized that it could be disastrous if the funnel hit there, so he kept running another 20 yards, then falling flat to the ground.

Something hit him in the head, and he remembers little more until the fury of the tornado had passed.

Bruised and Cut

Bruised and cut, he rose to his feet to see his car blown across Hwy. 7, lying smashed in a ditch. Another car was nearby.

Both had been blown some 150 yards by the force of the wind.

"It happened so fast I had no time to think, except to get the feeling that this time I'd had it," he said. "I haven't any idea why I'm here today. It was the most awful feeling I've ever experienced."

Poferi, 32, is controller at The Dahlberg Co. of Golden Valley, manufacturer of electronics devices and hearing aids.

While he is bruised and stiff today, other members of the Jaycees in the party were unscratched. They had planned a volleyball game.



PAKO CORPORATION'S debris after the storm was being picked by workers amidst concrete and an overturned car.

Rolvaag Asks Federal Help

ST. PAUL (UPI) — Gov. Rolvaag Friday asked President Johnson to designate as federal disaster areas the communities hit by tornadoes and high winds.

He wired the President:

"Many communities in Minnesota were struck last night by devastating high winds and tornadoes. Known damage at this early hour total 13 dead, 400 injured and property loss running to several millions of dollars. Urgently request extension of your current flood disaster designation be made to include this latest natural disaster."

Friday, LBJ granted it.

Rolvaag, who spent most of Thursday night inspecting the damaged areas, described the situation as "utter, sheer, unbelievable."

Playing It Cool

One suburbanite took Thursday's tornadoes in stride.

He was in the audience at Mount Olivet Lutheran church that evening, attending the All Sportsmen dinner, when Dr. Reuben Youngdahl announced he was wanted on the phone.

The spectator was informed that his house had been demolished, but that members of his family were unhurt.

Returning to his place at the dinner, the suburbanite calmly remarked, "There's nothing I can do about it anyway," and remained for the entire program.



Navarre was really overturned by the tornado, as this school bus being righted attests.

((Staff Photo by Welch))

Eye-Witness Report from Deephaven; Mother Screamed:

'Get into the Basement!'

by Cork Williams

They don't do it often, but my kids really hopped Thursday night when I screamed, "Get into the basement!"

It never occurred to them to voice their usual objections and argue over my demands.

It had been just seconds before while standing over the stove cooking dinner that I had called to my son asking, "What's that funny noise, Jeff?"

Even as I spoke, it dawned on me that this was the noise of a tornado. How I knew this I'll never know. I've never heard a tornado before.

Like Giant Train

It began like the revving up of an airplane and then bore down on us in Deephaven Park at Lake Minnetonka like a giant freight train gaining ear-splitting momentum as it approached.

There was no time to stop and turn off the heat of the electric range . . . there was no time to close windows or shut doors that had been opened to let in the fresh spring air . . . there was no time to locate candles or a flashlight. The word was "go" - and we did!

We were caught completely unawares, not having had the radio turned on. The rain and pelting hailstones, some the size of eggs, had to this point represented nothing more to us than a bad storm.

As I ran with my youngsters to the basement I was thinking, "Now which corner is it to which one is supposed to go - southwest? southeast? or is it north?" We settled on a storeroom in the southwest corner, where we hurriedly boarded up the only window.

We huddled there for what was actually a very short time in minutes, but long in worry, before we decided the big wind has passed over us.

Apprehensively venturing forth to the first floor, we still found, however, an ominous feeling in the air.

To the Neighbors

Flicking on the radio and learning that there were multiple tornadoes and a strong

immediate area, we decided to seek shelter with our neighbors in their basement.

We moved quickly - but not without my son taking along his dog and my daughter her pet hamster.

We all sat back to wait, discussing as we did the advantage of being situated in a little valley that protected us from the winds that leveled homes at Cottagewood and roared into Wayzata like a tidal wave.

Even at that, water was lifted out of St. Louis Bay and literally dropped in the middle of a road about half mile from the main lake - forming a lake of its own there.

Radio reception was very poor, but we followed closely the reports as they came in, bracing ourselves for the onslaught that the next hours might bring.

Homes Demolished

As the air cleared we felt safe in venturing forth.

With the illumination by the flashes of lightning of the Cottagewood shoreline about a quarter mile away, we realized that fashionable homes that once stood there had been demolished.

The sound of sirens echoing across the lake from Carson's Bay were frightening - blaring out a message that perhaps help was needed. The men from our group headed for Cottage-wood hoping to assist.

They were stopped at the Cottagewood bridge by a line of 12 ambulances and many more emergency vehicles. All was in capable hands, and the area was blocked off.

Back at Deephaven beach we found the water covered with debris blown into St. Louis Bay as the storm proceeded to Wayzata.

We picked up sections of wood paneling that had been torn off the walls of some homes; we found sheets of water-logged music; we noticed bottles of medicine floating in the water along with photographs, parts of kitchen cabinets, books and other personal effects.

One strip of metal torn off a house was twisted beyond recognition. A beam from a house was washed up on shore

The stench of sewage from the lake was oppressive.

Slept in Clothes

We returned to our homes still wary of what the night might bring. We retired fully clothed and with our ears alert to the noises of the night.

The sirens continued - and then began the whirring of power saws which buzzed on through the wee hours.

With the arrival of daylight Friday my son arose early for his morning paper route. In our yard he found wet, dirty and torn cancelled checks from the personal files of four different people living in Franklin, Minn., Hector, Fridley and Wayzata.

Checking with my neighbors I find that our home today is not much different than most except for three broken windows . . . last night's dinner is still on the stove untouched and we're all too tired to care.

She Flew In 'Copter With Gov.

by Betty Wilson

Gov. Rolyaag in a helicopter survey Friday afternoon viewed shattered homes and shattered communities left in the wake of the disastrous tornado of the night before.

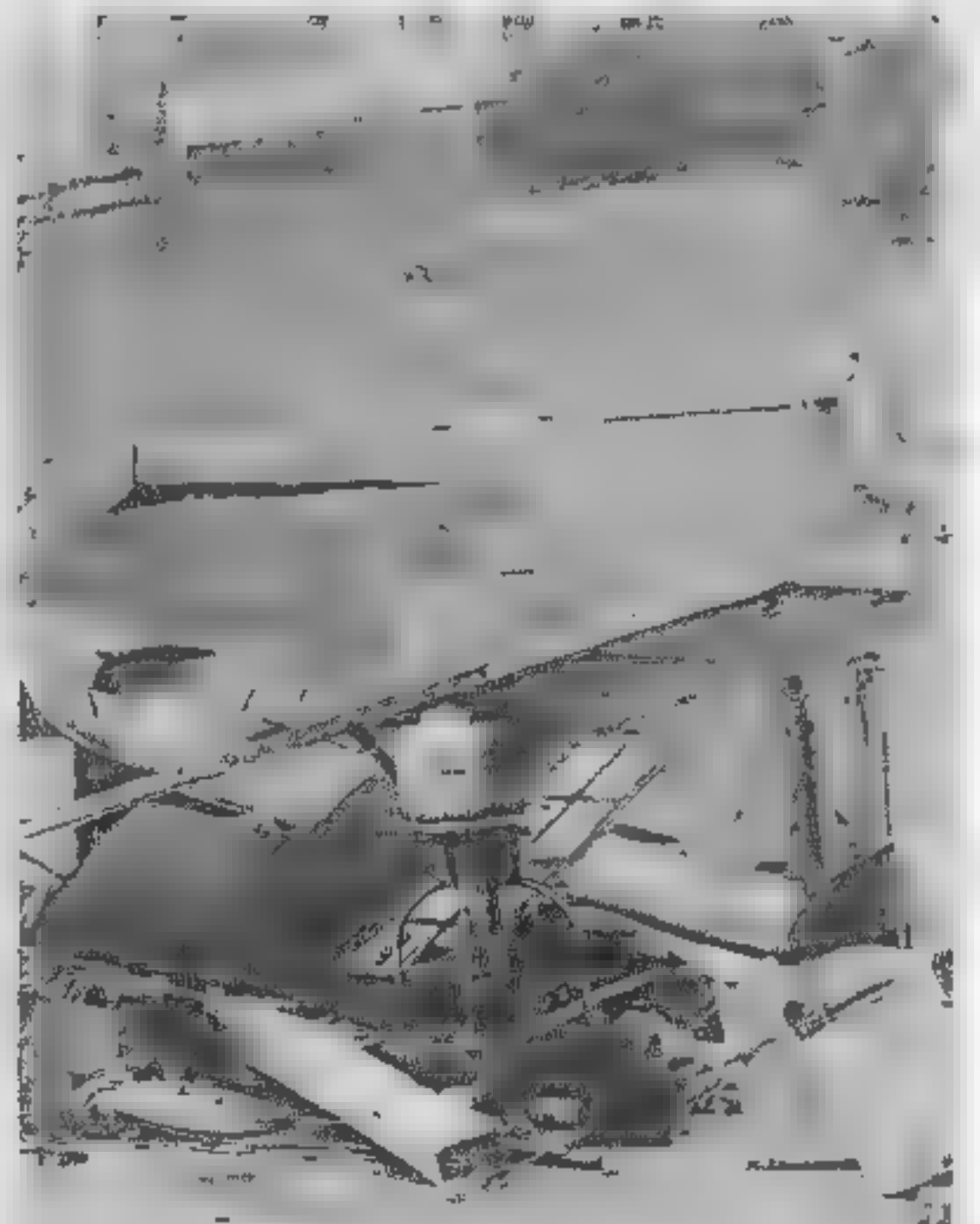
There were three of us, news reporters and a crew chief with the governor in a five passenger army helicopter.

Two Navy helicopters followed with more news people including Suburban newspaper photographer Dave Petek and Army and civil defense officials who told us "we haven't slept since the flood."

After leaving Holman Field, still in the midst of clean up operations, on our way out to battered Lake Minnetonka we looked down at the still muddy areas where recent flood waters had barely subsided.

He Was Tired

Once out over the storm area, the sober-faced and tired-looking governor, who had been out until 3:30 a.m. that morning going through areas hit by the



GARAGE—This debris is the remains of a garage on the northeastern shore of Lotus Lake after a twister ripped the area

incredible waste of debris and rubble, big trees uprooted, telephone poles toppled and once - beautiful houses smashed.

The copter circled and banked so we could get a good look at the Cottagewood area where 20 persons were injured, 500 homes damaged and 10 homes destroyed.

Navarre, where 23 persons were injured and 15 houses destroyed looked like a mass of broken matchsticks from the air, with a house here and there standing roofless exposing the cubicle rooms like a doll house.

Over Island Park and Mound it was the same unbelievable destruction with houses now only piles of kindling . . .

lovely Lake Minnetonka strewn with trash.

Bad in Anoka

Northward into Anoka county, the destruction was multiplied a hundred trailers in a trailer park rolled around, smashed and flattened 25 airplanes at the Anoka county airport flipped upside down, standing on noses and crumpled.

Schools were destroyed and whole neighborhoods leveled. The governor, who landed in Spring Lake Park to meet with local officials to plan relief action, called the scenes "staggering and devastating."

The people around the little shopping center at Highways 65 and 10, center of the disaster area seemed glad to see the

Bar Patrons Hit the Deck At Chanhassen

by Jim Walsh

"Everybody downstairs, quick. . .there's a tornado coming."

So everybody in the bar headed for the cellar.

The scene was in Chanhassen about 6:30 p.m. Thursday as the tornado hit the first suburb near the Twin Cities.

Joe Headke, bartender, was heading for work at Jerry's Bar when he spotted the funnel nearing Chanhassen.

Daytime bartender Tom O'Laughlin, a husky 200-pounder, didn't wait for a second invitation.

"When I saw Joe (another 200 pounder, about 6'2") running downstairs, I figured he was serious and dashed after him," said O'Laughlin.

Customers in the bar did likewise and 30 seconds later, the tornado struck. It missed the bar but the force of the wind jammed the back door. All the lights went out.

A half a block away, at the Qik & Ezy Superette, proprietor Ed Helmer ran to his cellar. The tornado passed over his store but plowed through Jerry's Mileage station across the street. The back of the station blew out.

No one was hurt in Chanhassen. Luckily the "twister" passed through the town where the least number of persons were situated.

Navarre

This community, with a business section two blocks long, had a little more warning but not enough.

The tornado blew through the middle of the business district, destroying Ronnie's cleaners, mayor Herb Ross's service station, Navarre Motors, the Orono municipal liquor store, Ekre's cafe and several homes.

Three children in Ekre's cafe were injured, but no Navarre residents were killed.

Jim Beahen, Orono liquor store manager, said he flattened himself on the floor of the walk-in cooler when he heard the wind getting stronger. One customer had just bought a six pack and walked out into the force of the tornado, but he miraculously escaped in ury.

About half of the liquor bottles were blown off the shelves, bringing a flow of tears to many when they saw the shambles Friday morning.

Mound

Mound probably received the toughest blow, next to Fridley.

Three persons were killed when the tornado sang through Island Park.

Seven homes near Cook's Bay took the brunt of the damage although many homes were destroyed on the other side of the island.

There was an average of only three students Friday in each class at Mound high school. . . the rest were helping Island Park residents clean up the debris.

The Red Cross set up headquarters at the Mound Legion hall, distributing clothes to those families who lost everything. . . and there were plenty of them.



This house WAS the home of the Myron Whites, Cottagewood.



(Staff Photos by Alys Brockway)

Scene on Bay Street in Cottagewood; note boat on porch.



SHAMBLES of the Minnetonka Boat Works on Carsons Bay.



CARRYING CLOTHING from her severely damaged home is Mrs. David Young of 1129 Welcome Circle,

Golden Valley. The tornado turned the house out of line with its foundation.

(Staff Photo by Ann Goodwin)

'Broken and Battered Houses Lay All Over'

by Alys Brockway

Broken and battered houses lay all over the place.

Parts of Cottagewood on Minnetonka were in the lake, on the roadside and along the beach where the churning tornado pushed them Thursday evening.

Stunned and shock-ridden homeowners roamed about in the Friday morning sunshine wondering how to begin the clean-up.

Actually where the wind cut a path there was little worth cleaning up - splintered wood, battered cars, water-stained curtains flapped uselessly through broken windows, where indeed, the window frames were still upright.

Whole trees were driven into living rooms, a sports car that was in a garage, rested on the shore along with broken glass and tangled wires.

"I don't know where our

bathbubs are - I haven't seen them," said Mrs. Myron White of Cottagewood as she picked up a piece of pink tile that was ripped off the wall.

"I was talking long-distance to my husband when I saw strange looking black stuff flying through the air toward the lake . . . I said the kids are here and we're heading for the basement and then hung up the phone," she added.

Dachshund Killed

It was good that she did because seconds later there wasn't much left BUT the basement. Only casualty in the White family was their dachshund.

On Cottagewood road west from the Minnetonka Boat Works on Carsons Bay the same sad story was repeated dozens of times.

Everywhere a mess.
Everywhere sightseers.



ANOTHER luckless home in Cottagewood.

Chanhassen Housewife, 6 Children Escape As Roof Departs; Goldfish OK Too

BY MRS. RICHARD PEARSON
(As Told to UPI)

CHANHASSEN (UPI) - My husband was flying back from Des Moines, Iowa, in a friend's plane. I was alone with our six children.

I cooked a chicken dinner and was getting ready to put it on the table when it started hailing outside - big as golf balls.

After it stopped, the children wanted to go out and collect them. While we were out in the yard I saw these big black clouds in the south, then I saw the funnel cloud.

"We Waited"

I hurried the children into the southwest corner of the basement like the weather bureau tells you to do. Then we waited.

Then we heard it. It was a very loud roar and we could hear glass flying upstairs. The basement windows blew out above us. Then it was quiet again.

We went upstairs and all we

saw was blue sky. The tornado had taken the east wall completely off the house. The roof was gone too. It had smashed our station wagon parked in back.

The piano is almost ready to fall out of the house and there's a lawn chair way up in a tree.

Chicken under Glass

You could say we had chicken under glass.

I was so thankful the children were okay. I didn't think about the damage to the house or the furniture. The house is only 6-years-old.

We've got kids scattered all over the neighborhood. I guess Dick and I will stay in a motel.

It was real freakish, the goldfish are still swimming around in the bowl back there in the southwest corner bedroom - the only room in the house that wasn't damaged.

By the time Dick got home from the airport it was all over.



Tree Smashes House

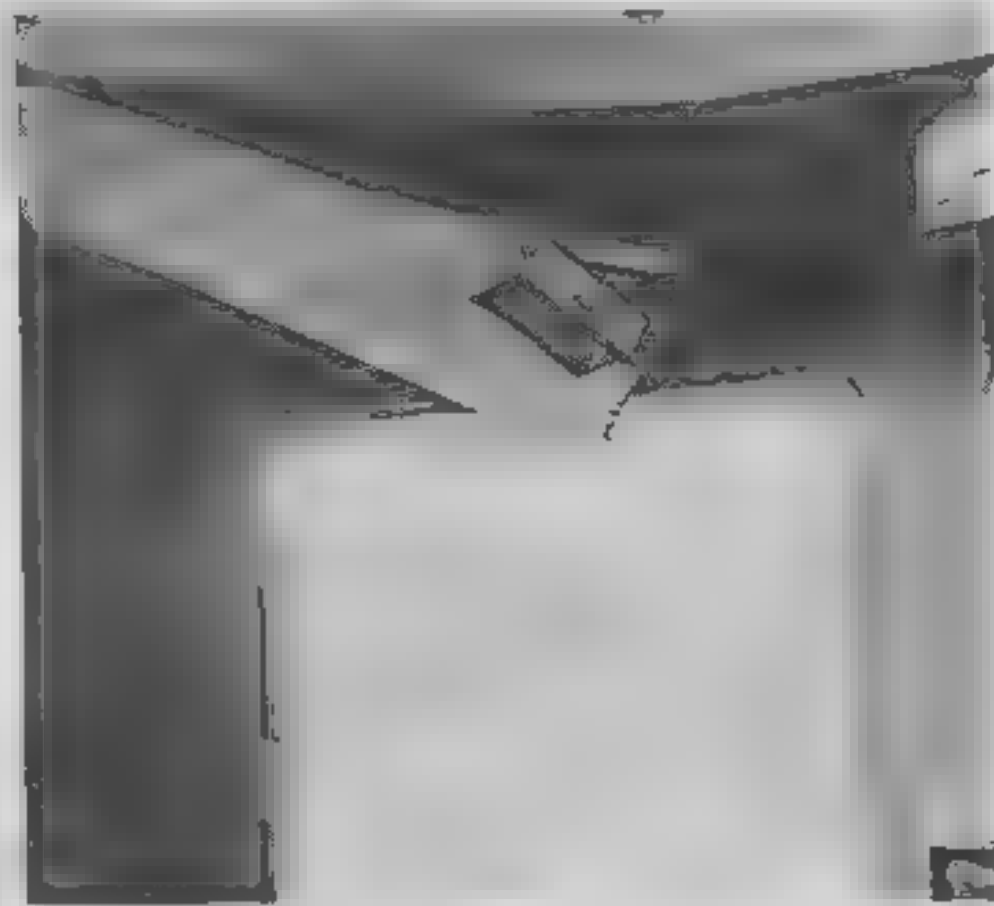
by Carole Wendell

The Robert Stevens residence on a hill overlooking the north shore of Lotus Lake suffered heavy damage during the May 6 tornado.

A giant oak tree plunged through a second story bedroom at the front of the Eden Prairie house (above) and smashed through to the family livingroom.

Mrs. Stevens said she shoved her youngsters into the basement when she heard the howling wind. As she raced through the living room for a last minute check, she watched horror-stricken as the tree crashed through the ceiling.

A neighbor, Harley Wolfe, Minneapolis Suburban Newspapers press foreman, said he watched the twister start its devastating path through his vicinity.



"The funnel was huge at the top," Wolfe said, "and came down to a sharp point that switched back and forth over the lake." He also said the black funnel sucked up water as it came across the lake.

Wolfe's property and scores of others in the area suffered heavy tree damage. Over a dozen homes sustained major damage. Boats in the area were strewn like twigs up and down the waterfront.

With Morningsider on 'CCO' Edina's Dick Chapman Was 'Man of the Hour'

by Barry Warren

An Edina man who sat before a microphone in a downtown Minneapolis radio station and ad libbed for six-hours on a tornado disaster will remember that story with mixed emotions.

Dick Chapman, an announcer for WCCO-radio was in the studio when the first warnings of a 25-mile-an-hour tornado crossing Highway 7 in Minnetonka was given at 6:30 p.m., Thursday.

Not far from the funnel's path was his house at 4619 Casco Ave., Edina.

The funnel began to move northeast, toward Crystal, Fridley and Spring Lake Park. Chapman's coordinating efforts with two dozen staffers in the field became relatively routine - as disaster stories go - until new complications set in.

Close to Home

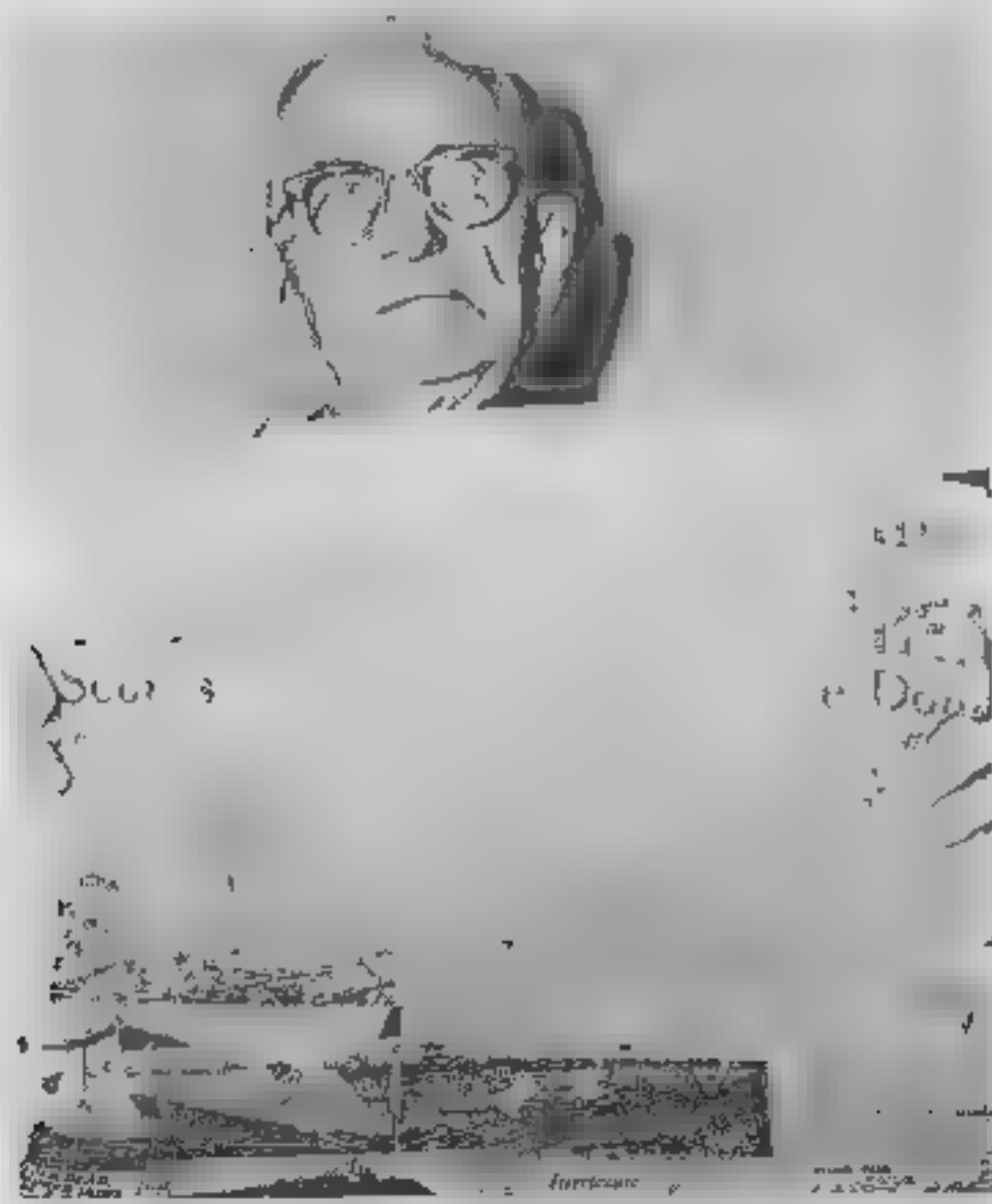
A field man sighted another black whirling cloud forming over the Southdale shopping center at 55th St. and Bryant

Ave. S. It was about two miles from where his wife, Jean, and their four children, Connie, 10, Cand., 8, Tim, 6, and Mike, 5, were located at home.

With Chapman as anchor man in the studio was Charlie Boone, who lives in Morningside. The black cloud increased in its intensity over the Edina area. While the two men apprehensively sweated out that danger they maintained constant touch with what soon developed into a full-scale smashing disaster in other suburban areas.

The time went fast and slow. As Chapman hurried through the fact lists of death and destruction from both staff men and private citizens who pinpointed funnels throughout the area, he and his colleague worried over their own families' doom.

"You can't imagine how it feels to be reporting a disaster story when it is rapidly developing in your own territory," Chapman said Friday, still shuffling through more reports from the studio's newsroom.



OLD NEWSPAPER TELLS STORY—Amel E. Feudner of Hopkins holds a copy of the Minneapolis Daily Star dated June 3, 1925 in which the story of a tornado of that day was told. Feudner has a newspaper collection of top stories dating back 50 years and more.

DO IT TO YOUR OWN AND GAS



CHANHASSEN got hit first and Jerry Schlenk at the Mileage station surveys his

A Determined Area Bounces Back

Two months after that fateful May 6, Recordland is bouncing back.

The stoicism with which the tornado's onslaught was met has been evidenced by a grim determination to recover from its effects.

Retail establishments have reopened their doors, and home owners by the hundreds have repaired or are rebuilding. "We liked it here and we're going to stay," sums up the attitude -- and it is a statement being made over and over again.

There are, of course, some instances where sufferers from

the tornadic fury have pulled stakes and left the area never to return, but they are isolated. The vast majority of residents found temporary shelter and immediately made plans to recoup their losses.

It is interesting, too, to note that in a majority of the cases where total loss was suffered

better homes are rising. Many of the streets where the tornado set itself down were lined with project homes -- block after block of the same thing.

But a different type of home is rising now. They are individually planned and built to suit the needs of the owner. Split levels are replacing ram-

blers, and next door a bungalow will rise where once stood a conventional row house.

Result is a better looking, more diversified residential area emerging, housing stout-hearted folks who have known adversity and now have learned to meet the challenge of an abiding faith in themselves and their way of life.

Industry is on the move again.



HURRYING TO MEET the deadline of a school reopening, bricklayers work at rebuilding Fridley Junior High school.

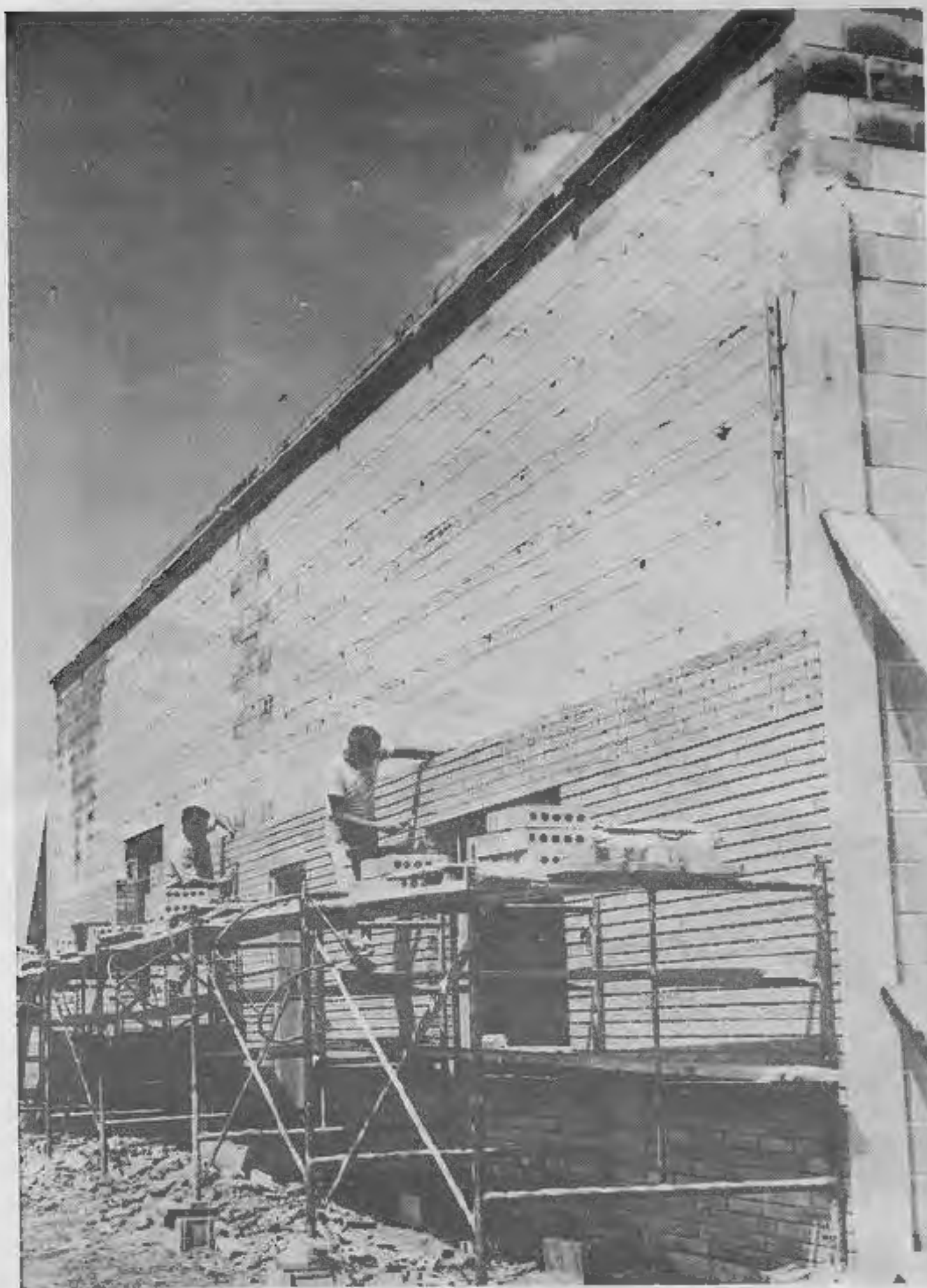


MAN CAN REBUILD his houses quick, but God's trees will always show the scars.

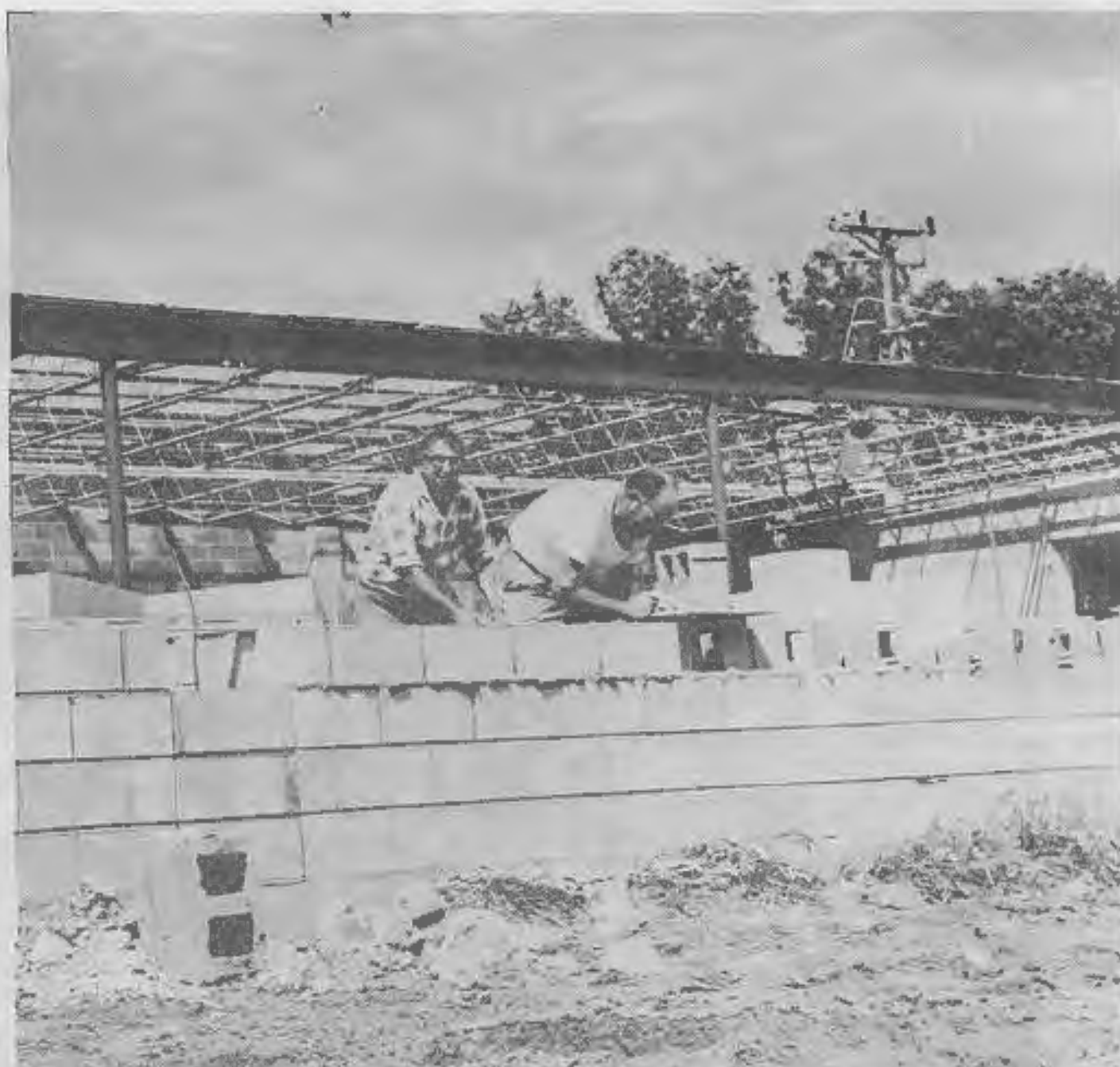
UTILITY MEN faced a tremendous task in rebuilding phone and power lines, but they stayed with it until the job was done.



SHOWING CONFIDENCE in the future of the area, a brand new building rises in Fridley.



WHITE CLOUDS—Not black or ominous green—form a canopy for this workman busily laying rafters for a new home.



BLOCK BY BLOCK the storm's damage is repaired on this Fridley building, under construction at the time of the storm and now being completed.

TWO NEW STARTS stand side by side as the framework of one house rises next to another rapidly nearing completion while a denuded tree in the background stands as silent witness to the "Longest Night."



ROOFING BEE made quick work of repairs to this home in Spring Lake Park.



NEW FROM THE GROUND UP is this home whose predecessor was completely destroyed.



MIDLAND COOPERATIVE'S storage tanks which had been thrown helter skelter by the twisters again rise majestically and symmetrically in Fridley.



A NEW STREET OF HOMES is going on on Lois drive in Mounds View. This is the same street where houses were completely destroyed.



WHERE SENATOR McCARTHY stood and viewed the ruins this fine home has arisen from the dust and desolation as silent witness to faith and determination.

NORTHERN ORDNANCE has made temporary repairs to its buildings and is again throbbing with activity.

